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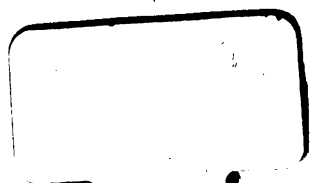
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A U B R E Y :

A NOVEL.

VOL. III.

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A U B R E Y :

A NOVEL.

By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL.

Sweet are the uses of Adversity.

SHAKESPEARE.

That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us ; but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces the far greater part.

JOHNSON.

VOL. III.

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CHAP-

AUBREY.

CHAPTER XXV.

Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.

THE hearts of the Aubreys accompanied Mr. Cowper through the various feelings he had experienced. He designedly, though imperceptibly, led them into the gradual variation of his own emotions at the time the events took place. They had alighted with him at the stile, on the Thornbury road; they had recalled to mind Fanny's activity in producing the apparatus to wash from his face the blood that had been drawn in her cause; they had renewed the battle, and shuddered.

at the first toll of the bell that had struck his ear. From that moment they had dreaded the event, yet admitted, as he had done, a hope, though slighter than his, that the funeral might be Mr. Grey's rather than Fanny's. Fear of the truth, however, predominated, and the tears prepared by their sympathy began to flow as soon as they heard that Grey himself performed the service. The awful verse from the psalm, the dreadful information from the coffin wrung their hearts; they mourned, they wept bitterly for Fanny. Mr. Cowper had ceased to speak, and there was a profound silence for some minutes: at length, Aubrey rose, and rang the bell for tea. Cæsar came in, and said it was ready in the drawing-room. Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, with Arthur-William, went up to the nursery to recover themselves, leaving Arthur,

thur, with his father and Mr. Cowper, walking up and down the parlour, each intent on his own contemplations.

When they all met again at the tea-table, and had resumed some degree of ease: "My dear friends," said Mr. Cowper, "my desire that you should know me, and take an interest in me, for the rest of life has induced me to make you acquainted with my sad story; let the interest I feel for you make amends for the pain I have inflicted."—"The pain of sympathy," said Aubrey, "is always attended with a kind of charm, by which it is infinitely more than compensated; pray take your tea and proceed."—"I long to know," said Arthur, "what became of that villain Smyth."—"And I," cried Arthur-William, "to hear about little Fanny." Mrs. Aubrey and the girls made kind enquiries respecting Mrs.

Smyth and Edmund's sister, and when they thought that Mr. Cowper was sufficiently refreshed, they one and all begged him to finish his story, which he accordingly thus resumed :

“ The sudden transitions of hope and fear terminating so dreadfully affected my brain ; I was seized, and carried raving out of the church. I continued in a state of insanity nearly three months, and it was not till long after, that my sister ventured to inform me of the real circumstances of Fanny's death. I had been removed to Bristol, and put under the care of a person who undertook the charge of the insane. My sister, surprised at my not returning to her according to my promise, had found me by enquiring at Melford. She was at no loss, as my money remained in her hands, and receiving hopes from the faculty, that my malady would yield to
time

time and proper treatment, she paid me unremitting attention. I will not dwell minutely on the information I received from her, when she had ascertained that I was sufficiently recovered to bear it. I think of it daily; I think of it for a wise purpose; and some day, I will show you a packet of letters, and a journal, that shall excite your admiration; but time will not allow it at present. The same devil that had tempted me at Oporto, had been working my destruction at Melford. The history of my infatuation, with some empaffioned letters I had written to Donna Seraphina, was fully conveyed to Edenbower by Smyth, who, it was now clear to me, had contrived to intercept all my Fanny's letters, copies of which she had kept, and which, with mine to Donna Seraphina, an anonymous one from the villain who transmitted them, and her own journal

from the day we parted, formed the contents of the packet delivered to me by my sister. The beginning of the journal was full of effusions of love, and ardent anticipations of my return; these were echoed by her letters; the other part contained the tenderest lamentations for the loss of my heart, which she felt it was impossible to survive, always ending, however, with, *but I forgive you Charles, may God also forgive and bless you!* The state of her mind brought on a miscarriage at an advanced period of her pregnancy; she sunk into a melancholy, from which she never recovered. Her mother had consulted Grey, who had written me an admonitory letter, which it seems had been also intercepted; and my conduct had been reprobated at Melford, where I was become an object of detestation. Such was the curse that a perfidious man and an artful woman
had

had brought upon me ; or rather, such was the miserable consequence of my own folly and guilt.

“ I now resigned every thought of happiness in this world ; I wished myself in another ; but bearing in mind my father’s last injunctions against suicide, I resolved to devote the rest of my life to repentance, and to strive to deserve by that, a re-union with the blessed spirit, whose society in the present state of existence I had forfeited. I trust I have kept my resolution ; I trust I have expiated. I am waiting patiently my release, endeavouring to fill up the intervening time as well as I can.” — “ But what,” cried Arthur, “ became of the villain who was the cause of all this misery ? ” — “ I never saw him afterwards,” replied Mr. Cowper, “ and it is very surprising that I have never been able to trace his person farther than Coryona,
B 4 where

where I told you he embarked for Bordeaux. Nor has it been the effect of negligence; I have done every thing in my power to find him. The Bankers, who furnished him with credit on Oporto, had not the least knowledge of him; the sums were placed in their hands by an agent, with whom they were also unacquainted, for which he received letters of credit to the amount, payable to Smyth. The letters of introduction which he had procured at Oporto from persons on the Continent, had merely been in consequence of the figure he had made wherever he stopped for a time. I have pursued a hundred different Smyths without success: nay, he negotiated the notes of hand I gave him in Portugal, and I could not trace him by the holder of them, who had received them from a foreigner. In short, I think he must have come to some untimely end; if not,

not, he has so completely enveloped himself, that, added to the commonness of the name, he has hitherto-escaped every search.

“ Having lost the friendship of the good Vicar of Melford, and dreading to return to a spot where every object would renew excitement to the malady from which I had just recovered, I resolved at first to avoid Gloucestershire, and all that could endanger the intellect; but sorrow and repentance, those corroding inmates of the guilty heart, were pleasing to mine; because, though I had been guilty, mine was not the guilt of depravity, not the guilt of a deep designing spirit. I had been misled; my soul had been enthralled by the appearances of virtue and friendship; and I was lost before I detected the masks. Happiness, what I had figured to myself as happiness, all that could have endeared

existence to me, had my Fanny lived to bless me with pardon and with love, was withdrawn from the prospect of life, which was now to be endured, not enjoyed. For the ideas of bliss, I substituted those of utility and resignation. I united my sister's lot with mine; I adopted her children, for she had a daughter born in England, about six months after our arrival, and I resolved to turn my poverty to account, by making it the nurse of fortitude and justice. I had some hard struggles; but by the strictest adherence to frugality, by curtailing the circle of wants, by considering debt as a worse evil than hunger or rags, I gained the victory.

“ It would be endless to tell you the severe trials, as well as petty mortifications which I found attendant on penury. I shall briefly give you an account of what happened to me, in consequence
of

of the debts I contracted at Oporto. Though both Grey and Cousel were too much offended to admit, and I too conscious to attempt, a justification of my conduct ; yet, they were too good, and too much attached to my Fanny, to forsake the interests of her child : they therefore gave me to understand, that they should not resign the trust of the settlement I had made, and Cousel promised to continue assisting my mother-in-law, in the management of the little farm, on condition, that I suffered her granddaughter, my little Fanny, to remain with her. My answer was, that when I recovered fortitude enough to see my child, I certainly would, and that I should then be determined by circumstances ; but, that it was neither my intention, nor my inclination, to take her from Mrs. Ross. Cousel was not a man to raise scruples, and he continued his

B 6

assistance.

assistance. By good management, the farm produced on an average from eighty to a hundred a-year; this by the settlement now belonged to me; but I consented to share it with my mother-in-law while she had the care of my child, taking rather the larger part, as she would now again resort to her own annuity, and as I had to take care of my sister and her two children, who were infants.

“ Reflecting on the difficulty of living on such a pittance, and remembering my debt to the worthy Horton of Oporto, I made my situation known to several of my father’s friends, and also to Neville’s family; Neville himself was gone abroad on his travels, and I hoped that some of them would interest themselves to put me in a situation which I might fill with credit, and by which I might be supported like a gentleman. All I gained by my application

I .

was

was a practical lesson, the theory of which I had learned in books, without retaining a sufficient impression of it to deter me from adding myself to the list of unqualified suitors: I was received with smiles, dismissed with advice, and deprived of my *entrées* at every house where it was heard that I was seeking the exertion of influence. This was not the worst; I was immediately marked out for calumny; I was said to have ruined myself by extravagance; my passion for Donna Seraphina was told against me, with all the exaggerations of malevolence. I was reported to have taken in a young man to marry my sister, to have ruined him, and caused his death by driving him to despair; in short, every incident that could be distorted to aspersions, was armed against me.

“ Friendless and sad, I took lodgings in the suburbs of London, consisting of
a parlour

a parlour and two small bed-rooms. Here, assisted by Harriet, I gloried in enduring the rigour of fate; I thought daily of Fanny, and of my own conduct, and justified Providence, whose chastisement proceeded from order and benevolence; while I despised the world, whose malevolence was not the result of justice, but the operations of a corrupt association of ideas combining with base passions.

“About two years after my arrival in England, a change took place in my situation, from my notes to Smyth being brought against me. As I was not able to take them up, I was arrested and carried to the Fleet-prison. In going in, I met a gentleman coming out, whom I remembered to have seen at Oporto, and who left it about a fortnight after my arrival there. He seemed to know me, yet evidently avoided a recognition :

recognition: he was not the first acquaintance who had coolly passed me by, and I had long ceased to be mortified; but I was unjust to the motives of this young man, from whom I received a letter the next day, requesting permission to pay me a visit, and who had passed me unnoticed, only through fear of hurting my feelings.

“ His name was Searle, I say was, for he died about two years ago; he was a nephew of Dr. Searle’s, the Rector of Mariton; and having been delighted with some civilities he received from my father in Portugal, was anxious to return them to me. He expressed a desire to serve me; this I told him was impossible, but he would not be refused. In short, after hearing my story, with most of which he was previously acquainted, he assured me that, though he could not heal the wounds my
heart

heart had received, it would be my own fault if I were not set to rights with regard to money-matters. 'The notes to Smyth, and your bond to Mr. Horton,' said he, 'must be taken up and consolidated.' I told him that I had not the means. 'But I have,' replied he, 'and you may hereafter contrive some mode of discharging the debt; at present, I have taken the liberty to bail you, and we will settle the terms at leisure. I am lately from Oporto, and can give you the satisfaction of knowing, that Donna Seraphina de Monocello is universally despised. After your departure, she returned to the city, where she laboured with all her power to blacken your character, particularly charging you with the dishonour of unfounded boasts: but no credit is given to her by the English, and even her own countrymen

associate

‘associate with her as little as possible.
‘Perhaps you do not know,’ continued he, ‘that your friend Horton is
‘dead. He was carried off by an apoplexy about three months ago, and
‘your bond is either here already, or on
‘its way to be put in force against you.’
I assured Mr. Searle, that I had no property in the world to give him as a security, except a life-interest in the produce of a few acres of ground, which was fully employed in the bare maintenance of five persons. ‘How stands
‘your fund of Greek and Latin?’ said he. ‘Have you any objection to
‘mortgage that as a security?’—‘I understand you,’ replied I: ‘perhaps,
‘a short brushing up would make me
‘as fit for a tutor as nineteen in twenty
‘that undertake the task of tuition, but
‘I do not think my conscience would
‘allow me.’ ‘I’ll relieve your conscience,’

‘science,’ said he: ‘my uncle is guardian to two orphans, who will have tolerable fortunes when they come of age: their capacities seem to be very confined; but he is of opinion, that if a man can be found who will consider them more as his sons than his pupils, their intellects may be drawn forth; the one is thirteen, the other fourteen years old. I am in quest of such a man as my uncle wishes for; and indeed, I came hither yesterday after a gentleman, who having other views on the arrangement of his affairs, declined the offer which I now make to you. You must comply,’ continued he, ‘for you are not expected to make them profound scholars; and if you should even fail in the attempt to enlighten their minds, the blame will still be cast upon nature rather than on you. On this plan two hundred

‘ a-year will be given with each of them.’ I thanked Searle from the bottom of my heart, and agreed to make the trial.

“ To be brief, for I have already indulged my garulity too much, I received the boys : they lived with me about six years, and I had the satisfaction to see them turn out amiable and intelligent young men. I thought this alone a great reward for the pains I had sincerely bestowed upon them ; but, in addition, by living on three hundred a-year, my whole debt to Searle was cleared off, and I secured the cordiality and friendship of the Rector of Mariton.”

“ But you have said nothing of little “ Fanny ;” said Arthur-William. “ I “ am afraid, my dear boy,” replied Cowper, “ to enter upon the subject. About two months after my recovery of reason, I thought I could bear to see
her

her without danger ; I went to Eden-bower in disguise ; I discovered myself only to my mother-in law, with whose concurrence I contrived to remain concealed in the house four-and-twenty hours. What I felt on entering the house, and at the sight of my child, is not to be described—let it pass—I tore myself away—I paid her another visit, and another. In short, I found that I could not live without her, and about the time that Searle made me the offer of my pupils, I sent my sister to Melford, to propose to Mrs. Ross, that she and Fanny should live a part of the year with us.

“ Harriet was not satisfied with barely executing her commission ; she saw Grey and Coufel, she told them my story, described the arts that had been practised to seduce me, and painted my repentance. She softened their hearts, and, aided by their religion, obtained my forgiveness.

forgiveness. Grey, the benevolent, the pious, the excellent Grey, wrote me a few lines with his own hand; his words were—"Misguided, unfortunate man! "I believe your repentance to be sincere; come and finish your expiation "at the grave of the angel you have—"lost: come, and by attention to her "child and to your future life, endeavour to confirm your redemption, and "to merit a re-union with the blessed "saint in a world where there is no corruption; come to your home and be "comforted."

"Time, though it produced no alteration in my heart or recollection, respecting my beloved Fanny, fortified my nerves. Objects that would once have plunged me into despair, or overwhelmed me with madness, tempered my sorrow, soothed and delighted me. I accepted Grey's invitation; I removed to
Edenbower

Edenbower with my sister and her children, and there I trained my pupils. My mind assumed a kind of melancholy happiness, in which I resisted depression by attaching all earthly bliss to the pursuit of the will of HIM, whose chastisements are blessings; and particularly in attention to my little Fanny's understanding, which I cultivated with all my power; at the same time that I endeavoured to form her soul to such enjoyments on earth, as should prepare her early for those to which her angelic mother had been removed. I was successful—the soil was of the best kind—I was successful beyond my warmest hopes.

“She had the start in years of her cousins, whom she delighted to lead in the path she had taken. To my sister, she owed the progress she made in music, and the ease and grace of her carriage: with my assistance, she became acquainted

quainted with herself ; with the passions of the heart, the faculties of the mind ; and she sedulously and eagerly devoted her powers to rectifying the former, and cultivating the latter. Oh ! she was eminently successful in both. She was ambitious of excellence, without envy or emulation. Her anger was without sin, she had discarded from it every degree of rage, revenge, retaliation, and fullness ; it was but an animated disapprobation of error. She had learned to temper fear and grief by resignation ; and hope, and joy, were removed from the dominion of fancy, to that of reason. Hatred of vice was unattended with malevolence to the person ; and genuine love and modesty banished pride, and vanity, and jealousy. She aspired not to the masculine walks of science ; but in her pursuit of pleasing as well as of important knowledge, she was content,

tent, after satisfying her understanding in some points, to take much upon trust—much she relied on her father. Her memory, imagination, judgment, unfolded themselves gradually, but strongly. She was daily adding to the stores of her mind.

“ In her person she resembled her mother ; I was always told, and believe, that in her face she resembled me. I early made her acquainted with my history, and often took her with me to visit her mother’s grave, over which I had placed a simple urn on a pedestal. Sorrow had yielded much to the force of parental affection, when my second Fanny was old enough to feel an interest in her mother’s tomb ; and I refrained from weeping, when we went together. Once, however, when I thought myself alone, she came upon me unawares, and found me bathed in tears. She embraced me, and

and mingled hers with mine. I indulged the sensation. I accused myself to my child—I wept upon her neck. Finding my agitation increase, she stifled her own emotion, and looking at me with the impressivè countenance of a seraph, said ;
‘ My dear papa, this is very wrong ;
‘ you say you think, that the spirits of
‘ those who love us, delight in viewing
‘ us ; surely it cannot be to see us in
‘ pain ; long have you been forgiven
‘ by the beloved spirit, by whose memory you are afflicted : this agitation may
‘ be a species of ingratitude to her. Oh !
‘ cease to court affliction, and let us in
‘ future think of her, and speak of her
‘ with joy, as being far happier than we
‘ could make her here.’ I ceased to weep ; I blessed the good sense and piety of my child, and from that moment I yielded to the dictate of wisdom, to court affliction no longer.

“In time I forgot the misery I had merited. As Fanny advanced in life, a new generation grew up with her at Melford. She won the hearts of old and young. I was again included in their smiles. My sister and the Smyths, resigned to their lot, enlivened our habitation. Our mornings were devoted to mental improvements, our evenings sometimes to the perusal of works of imagination, sometimes to music and dancing, and not unfrequently to neighbourly meetings, and familiar talk, in which good humour prevailed, and no one feared a critic. Happiness once more took possession of Edenbower.

“Happiness is a fickle tenant; she staid but a few years with me. When Fanny had attained her eighteenth year, a sudden, incomprehensible malady, of the nature of which I am to this day ignorant, deprived me of my child—of my friend

friend—of such a friend as seldom falls to the lot of man. I have no idea of any affection so perfect, or so well founded, as the friendship that subsisted between us. It was distinct from the fondness of father and daughter, though heightened by it. It was intellectual sympathy. It was a similar comprehension of things, similar conceptions, similar pursuits, unbounded confidence. It is only by reflecting on the nature of such a friendship, that my loss can be estimated. Oh! most gladly would I have relinquished every comfort of life to have preserved her. The progress of her dissolution, though sure, was tardy; but though attended with intolerable sufferings, she bore the dreadful trial without a murmur. Her fortitude and resignation must have excited the admiration of angels. No complaint escaped her lips. She was long sensible that she was ap-

c 2

proaching

proaching her end, and one evening as she observed from her bed a bright planet, which appeared through the window of her chamber, she desired her aunt to look at it, saying ; “ Papa used
“ to tell me, that there was nothing un-
“ likely in the idea of our being transf-
“ lated from planet to planet : I wonder
“ if that is to be mine ! ” She had no fear of death, for she had early accustomed herself to think of it less as the end of life, than as the beginning of another state, and her only dread was what I should suffer. She never looked at me but with a smile, and even when her approaching dissolution became visible ; when her slender limbs bespoke their mortality, and a few tenacious sparks of life just detained her spirit from its escape, her countenance was serene and lovely. Oh ! how did my heart bleed ! and how often did I humble myself on my knees before
God,

God, imploring proofs of his mercy and forgiveness in the restoration of my child! My distracted soul forgot its unworthiness, and prayed to be the object of a miracle: ‘Oh God,’ I cried, ‘medicine cannot avail—she is now entirely in thy hands—spare her to me, oh God!—I beseech thee spare her to me!’ No—it was a foolish prayer—her mother deserved her more than I; the removing angel knew it, and obeyed the mandate he had received. Away, again, flew happiness from my cottage, and sorrow and mourning entered.

“But what then!” exclaimed Cowper, after pressing his handkerchief to his eyes, “He, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, ratifies mourning with a blessing; and I believe it to be pregnant with love towards the race

of man : nor was it a vain enthusiasm
that guided Dr. Young in saying,

“ Smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love.”

The stroke of misery which comes home to a man's own breast, is his best preparative for heaven; it breaks his heart, it renders it contrite, and makes it a sacrifice which God will not despise. Mine had not been sufficiently subdued; mine had again begun to be proud and happy. What though I was not impious, I had formed anew my heaven upon earth, and should have left it with reluctance: but now, I think warmly and anxiously of that to which Providence has removed my treasures. “ Yes, my dear friends,” said Cowper with a sigh, and pressing the hand of Emily, whose tears were flowing down her cheeks,

cheeks, "I believe it to be a salutary blow; as such I receive it with submission and resignation, trusting, that he who struck it will aid me to pursue, with my broken heart, the duties which I have yet to perform on earth."

CHAP. XXVI.

The resentment of the unfortunate redounds upon themselves.

IT was late when Mr. Cowper concluded his story, and as the sympathy of his friends abounded more in tears than words, he only staid a few minutes to express the relief and satisfaction he had experienced in the communication of his misfortunes, as well as in the hope of confirming by it a friendship which he was led to desire by the kindness and virtues of a family, whom he should never have sought, but for the report of their calamity. They each shook hands with him, and he promised to bring Edmund next morning to take leave of them.

them. The family sat some time together after he was gone, expressing their pity for his sufferings, and fully absolving him of his guilt. He had warmly interested their feelings ; they loved him, and were prepared to love his sister and her children. The little they had seen of Edmund had prepossessed them in his favour ; they talked of his sister Harriet without knowing her, and they anticipated the enjoyment of intimacy.

As Mr. Cowper intended to go out of town next day by the Gloucester coach, which set out at four o'clock in the afternoon, he went early with Edmund to Albemarle-street, where they took an affectionate leave of the Aubreys, with whom they exchanged promises of correspondence and occasional visits. Mrs. Aubrey sent a kind invitation to Mrs. Smyth by Mr. Cowper, and the young folks loaded Edmund with affectionate

that he began to extend his expectations even beyond the original cost of the paintings.

The day at length arrived. The auction-room was full, and Mr. Flourish from his desk delivered new puffs in the best style of his laudatory lore. The first painting put up was a fine Claude Lorraine. "What an enchanting scene does this landscape present," said Mr. Flourish, "the plumed wood on the hill beyond the vale, arrayed in striking majesty with summer's thickest robe, appears to descend to the left in a gentle waving line, and the orb of day, declining, skirts the fleecy top with gold, seeming to rest upon the enlivened edge, while the intervening foliage abates the power of its rays, so as to permit the eye unpunished to behold its glory. How beautiful the valley ! how grateful to the sight those
rich

“ rich pastures, where the cattle and the
“ fleecy tribe are grazing, placed so ju-
“ diciously on that undulating surface,
“ which the sun, as he sinks behind the
“ hill, marks with varied light and shade.
“ I see the eyes of all the company are
“ charmed, and riveted to the spot. The
“ rustic building to the right, lofty and
“ prominent, which receives a brown
“ tint from the sun’s weakened rays,
“ will irresistibly lead you on to trace
“ the landscape to its verge, and with
“ delight to pore along the distant coun-
“ try, adorned with fainter woods and
“ lessening edifices, bounded afar by
“ mountains, which the painter’s skill
“ compels your imagination to dress with
“ woods, no less perfect than those his
“ pencil has distinguished more boldly.
“ What a sweet evening does the sub-
“ ject present ! Glowing, yet mild
“ and serene ; nor less so that yonder
“ slowly

and fifty. This accuracy of judgment raised the stranger in the opinion of Aubrey, who was going to renew his conversation, when the gentleman, looking at his catalogue, exclaimed, "Why what the deuce does he bring this forward so soon for! This fine Madonna will ruin the sale." "Here," cried Flourish, "here is Raphael's most charming Madonna."—The stranger smiled. Aubrey looked round, and thought he saw a pretty general smile in the room.—"His earlier Madonnas," proceeded the auctioneer—"those I mean of his middle style, are generally of a lighter and less-taking complexion. I am fully persuaded, though some men's judgments are apt to be guided by particular attachments, that a complete brown beauty is really preferable to a perfect fair one; the bright brown gives a lustre to all the other colours, a vivacity to
" the

“ the eyes, and a richness to the whole
“ look, which one seeks in vain in the
“ whitest and most transparent skins.”

Aubrey was smiling at this repetition of Flourish's puff, which had already been privately discharged at the person who applied to purchase this Madonna without bringing it to the hammer, when his ears were saluted with a laugh from the side of the room where the Madonna hung; and presently some of the company were seen getting up on the seats to look that way. Aubrey, Sensitive, and the stranger, also got up to see what occasioned the laugh. The first object that struck Aubrey was Sir Kit Keeping pointing at a figure directly under the Madonna. Following the direction of his finger, he observed a handsome woman sitting and looking through a frame, not unlike that of the picture above her. At her back was a painting, of which
only

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" the

“ the eyes, and a richness to the whole
“ look, which one seeks in vain in the
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only the ground was seen—her attitude and dress were precisely the same as the Madonna's, nor was it long before Aubrey observed the striking resemblance of their features. "This is a malicious trick," said the stranger, "the picture is not an original, nor is it a copy, but merely an attempt at the style of Raphael, and that very woman, about five years ago, sat for the figure. Her husband, one Jacob, a stock-broker, there he stands, became a bankrupt next year, and the picture was bought for a trifle by a collector, who had the address to dispose of it for an original Raphael. Sir Kit Keeping himself was within an ace of buying it, but he took the opinion of a good judge, and treated it with contempt."—"You seem to speak with great certainty, sir," said Aubrey.—The stranger smiled. Flourish having observed

observed what was passing, spoke to one of his men, who immediately went and took the frame from before the lady, and desired her to remove her seat, while Flourish endeavoured to recall the attention of the company, by continuing the speech he had prepared for this Madonna.

“ All the best artists in the noblest
“ age of painting, about Leo X’s time,
“ used this deeper and richer kind of
“ colouring ; indeed, the glaring lights
“ introduced by Guido, went a great
“ way towards the declension of the art ;
“ as the enfeebling of the colours by
“ Carlo Marati has since almost com-
“ pleted the fall of it in Italy. In this
“ Madonna of Raphael’s”.—Flourish was
here interrupted by a general laugh.—
“ Hush—shame !” cried Sensitive, who
had attentively listened to all that the
stranger had said to Aubrey, and whose
nerves

nerves were suffering agony for the disgrace of his friend's Madonna. "Put up the picture, sir," said he to Flourish, who, the moment he could be heard, asked the favour of some one of the company to mention a sum. The husband of the Madonna, in whom Aubrey now recognized the person who had proposed a private purchase of it, stood up, and with a grimace, which bespoke his certainty of possessing the picture of his wife at his own price, bid twenty guineas. "Twenty guineas!" said Flourish, in a tone of surprise. "Three hundred," cried Sensitive, with an audible voice. The stockbroker's face suddenly fell, his mouth opened, and his eye-lids were drawn up towards his brow. The connoisseurs turned their eyes with astonishment on the bidder, who was not unknown among them; whose judgment, in spite of his youth, was highly esteemed, and

and whose pencil had evinced talents not inferior to that of any amateur. Some of them were even staggered, and for nearly a minute watched the countenances of Sensitive, Sir Kit Keeping, and another acknowledged judge, who was in the room. The grave neutrality of the last, and Sir Kit's malicious grin, completely removed the momentary doubt raised by Sensitive's spirited and decisive tone : no bidder followed, and the stockbroker's wife was knocked down to him.

“Generous fellow,” said Aubrey to his young friend, “I feel the kindness
“of your attempt to give a value to the
“picture : but I have not a doubt that
“I have been imposed upon in the purchase of it ; and pray do not suppose
“that I shall suffer your generosity to
“be so ill requited as to let you have
“it : I consider it as bought in.”—
“Why

“ Why so,” said Sensitive, “ the painting is fine, whoever be the painter ;
“ and that the artist possesses great talents is proved by its having passed
“ with several connoisseurs for a Raphael.” “ Sir,” said the stranger,
“ it would have still passed, and would
“ have been sold this day for an original,
“ had it not been for the pains which
“ have been taken to detect it. Sir
“ Kit Keeping has been buzzing it about
“ the room, and I know the trick of
“ Jacob’s wife to be his contrivance.”—
“ Are you sure of that ?” cried Arthur, reaching across Sensitive and his father.”
“ Perfectly sure,” replied the stranger ;
“ I know the parties well.”—“ Infamous !” said Sensitive ; “ he deserves
“ to be kicked out of the room ; as for
“ me, I am satisfied with my purchase,
“ and shall not give it up.” The stranger smiled, and being beckoned by

a gentleman at some distance, left his seat, while Flourish was preluding the next picture with an appropriate piece of eloquence. "Sir," said a gentleman to Sensitive, "that's the celebrated Martineau, who spends so much of his time in Italy, whence he is just returned; he is said to be himself the painter of the Madonna." Both Aubrey and Sensitive had heard of him, but neither had seen him.

The latter was expressing his pleasure, and declaring the new value he set upon his purchase, when a noise was heard at the door, and immediately after a scuffle took place. In a moment the company were all on their feet, and Aubrey among the rest, looking for the cause of the disturbance, saw Arthur, who had slipped away unperceived, dragging Sir Kit Keeping out by the nose with one hand, while with the other he kept off some
of

of the baronet's friends, who were attempting to disengage them, which they soon accomplished. The baronet's nose, released from the pressure of Arthur's gripe, felt, with the return of the blood, a titulating pungency, which set him a sneezing—" 'Tcha! 'tcha! " 'tcha! damn the boy's fingers! 'tcha! " 'tcha! I'll whip the cub to death." Sensitive, delighted, attempted to hold back Aubrey, who nevertheless quickly made his way through the company, and seizing his son by the arm, sternly demanded how he dared to commit such an outrage. "I could not help it, sir," said Arthur, "and indeed I have done nothing but what he deserves."—"I am extremely sorry," replied Aubrey, "to find you so prompt in taking vengeance into your own hands, in discovering a disposition to revenge—" "I hope the company will make some
" allow-

"allowance for your youth."—"I'll take care," cried Sir Kit, "to carry a rod for master the next time I meet him." Sensitive smiled, and Arthur was going to speak, but Aubrey hurried him away. The baronet affected to treat him as a boy, and suffered him to depart with his father.

Sensitive, who had followed Aubrey to the bottom of the room, returned to his seat. Sir Kit, who, not suspecting the wrath of Arthur, had gone to the lower end of the room in consequence of an anonymous message, also went back to his place, laughing at the audacity of the urchin; and Flourish resumed his occupation. The sale proceeded; the originals went off at their full value; but, unfortunately, Aubrey had raised a host of enemies by daring to abstract himself suddenly from the brutality of Sir Kit Keeping's observations, the day he had

called to consult him on the sale of his pictures; and every piece not genuine, or which was the least dubious, and there were many more than the owner of them thought of, had been marked. Some of these were sold for a trifle, some were not bid for at all; the whole produced little more than a fourth of what was expected by Aubrey, who now practically learned the fable of the viper and the file: the resentment of the unfortunate redounds upon themselves.

CHAPTER XXVII.

*A Paternal Lecture. Result of the Auction.
Preparations for a Journey into the Country.
A Paradox. Charles Sensitive. The Family
leave Town.*

THE emotion with which Aubrey had checked his son, and hurried him from the auction room, arose less from displeasure on the immediate occasion, than from an anxious apprehension of the spirit it evinced. Arthur, whose mind had hitherto displayed only feelings of the gentlest nature, had lately shown a determination to appeal to violence. He had a few days before stunned his tutor by a blow, and, with as little consideration, had now pulled a baronet by the

nose. Aubrey, however, who we have seen, was never precipitate himself, could not but reflect, that both these actions had been the result of noble motives; and when he thought of the part he had in those motives, love became his predominant feeling: his hand, before they got into the street, had slipped from a gripe of the upper joint of Arthur's arm, to a gentle familiar leaning on the lower one. "My dear sir," said Arthur, "I hope you are not seriously angry. You heard, as well as I, the abominable conduct of the conceited scoundrel."—"Arthur," replied Aubrey, "I am more unhappy than angry: for, as your motives were amiable; though they led to an unjustifiable effect, anger cannot rise in my mind. But I am indeed, very uneasy, to discover in you, such marks of a hasty temper, and a disposition to such violent acts
" of

of resentment, as not only shut up all
avenues to conciliation, but lead directly
to the most dreadful consequences.
From your youth, and Keeping's character,
I think we shall escape at present: but, were you two or three years
older, and he, according to fashionable
notions, a man of spirit, you would be
driven to the alternative of fighting a
duel, or giving up the opinion of the
world. To be indifferent in the latter
case, is incompatible with the feelings
of a young man in your situation
of life; and, on the other hand, you
never would be able to bear the reflection
of putting a man to death."
"I hope," replied Arthur, "that I
shall never experience such a misfortune.
I would sooner let a man fire
at me, than I would fire at him."—
"Then," said Aubrey, "you ought to
be cautious, very cautious, not to
D 3. " throw

“ throw yourself into a predicament of
“ this kind.”—“ But, how is it possi-
“ ble,” cried Arthur, “ to hear or see
“ one I love most dearly, injured or in-
“ sulted ; to know that a father, who is
“ all goodness and affection, is used
“ unworthily, without flying upon the
“ wretch that dares to treat him ill !”

This was a very delightful and seductive argument to a father : Aubrey felt its force ; but, at the same time, resisted the seduction. Pressing his boy’s arm with a warmth that showed the gratification of his heart, he said ; “ Amiable
“ propensities must be made to yield to
“ sober duty. Consider too, my dear Ar-
“ thur, that by not submitting indigna-
“ tion to the conduct of judgment, you
“ must, in all likelihood, entail misery
“ on the man whom you love. Resent-
“ ment is natural ; but the brave and
“ polished never evince it by impetuous
“ attacks.

“ attacks or scurrilous words : they have
“ recourse to calm looks, and dignified
“ language. The mistakes of such men
“ are easily rectified : but the effects of
“ passion are rarely counteracted, till a
“ crime is committed. If you mean to
“ punish every scoundrel you meet, you
“ must prepare yourself for the character
“ of a duellist ; a character, which, it is
“ evident, from your shuddering at the
“ bare idea of depriving another of life,
“ you are not calculated to sustain.”—
“ I hope I never shall,” said Arthur,
“ for nothing can be more odious than a
“ duellist ; I mean, a captious man,
“ ever ready to appeal to a pistol for the
“ decision of differences ; but when one
“ is ill-treated without a cause, and with-
“ out any reason for submission to ill-
“ treatment, must one put up with
“ it ?”—No,” replied Aubrey, “ but
“ the means to be adopted for resentment,

“and attention to the consequences of
“those means, will always distinguish
“the man of sense from the proud, im-
“petuous man, who conceives he is
“not born to bear any mortification,
“and abruptly flies to gross and com-
“mon means of wreaking his passion
“on the offenders. I am now speak-
“ing of men of the world; men
“who consider themselves subject to
“the law of honour; among whom
“there are degrees of distinction,
“from him who blusters on the slightest
“opposition, to him who, too wise to be
“a challenger, pays his tribute to fashion-
“able opinion by obeying a summons;
“and who, exposing his life to the less
“scrupulous dealer of death, fires his
“pistol in the air. But I hope, my dear
“Arthur, you will soon be convinced, if
“you are not already, that however im-
“perious this law of honour is over men
“of

“ of the world, it is not only incom-
 “ sistent with the divine law, but is in
 “ itself neither rational nor amiable : yet,
 “ as I do not wish you to defy the world,
 “ I would have you to be so guarded in
 “ your conduct, as not to incur the alter-
 “ native. This happy course is success-
 “ fully pursued by the generality of men
 “ of honour : for, how many thousands
 “ are there of the nicest feelings who
 “ have never challenged, or been chal-
 “ lenged ? Though we hear frequently
 “ of duels, the number is nothing, com-
 “ pared with the mass of men of honour,
 “ who pass their life without similar
 “ encounters ; and of those that happen,
 “ in nineteen out of twenty, the comba-
 “ tants are not of the most respectable
 “ classes who acknowledge the law of
 “ honour as paramount to all others. In
 “ the army, where every man must be
 “ brave, and where jealousy of honour is

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“ carried

“ carried to the highest pitch, we seldom
“ hear, that those who are greatly distin-
“ guished for talents and courage, have
“ had the misfortune of deciding private
“ quarrels in a duel. What is the rea-
“ son of this? A knowledge of the
“ world; a knowledge of the passions of
“ other men, and a command of their
“ own. It is the result of patience and
“ of prudence early learned, combined
“ with good temper, which, to the ho-
“ nour of human nature I say it, is more
“ general than bad temper. But not to
“ go from yourself: your temper, my
“ dear Arthur, is certainly good; and
“ till our misfortunes, I have thought
“ you sufficiently gentle; but, if your
“ impatience increase with every trial,
“ you will soon be a very different
“ character from what I have hitherto
“ hoped. Sir Kit Keeping has, I allow,
“ behaved very ill; but, if you were
“ determined

“determined to disgrace him, I think,
“you might have done it better by ex-
“posing his conduct. All who heard
“the circumstances, would have parti-
“cipated your indignation : and what
“can be more satisfactory than to know,
“that the worthy partake in our resent-
“ments ? Whereas, before any body is
“prepared to espouse your feelings, all
“are roused against you, by considering
“your action as the violent effect of a
“passionate temper, which is always of-
“fensive, but particularly in youth.”
“My dear Sir,” said Arthur, with a tear
starting to his eye, “I feel I have done
“wrong—I ask your pardon.” This
conviction of Arthur’s mind delighted
Aubrey’s heart. The spirit of his boy
could not but be pleasing to him ; yet,
that pleasure was alloyed by the dread
of its taking a wrong turn : and he en-
deavoured to inculcate those principles

by which it might be restrained; and kept in its proper channel. He compared the submission of Themistocles, in the famous speech to the officer who raised his cane over his head—"Strike, but hear"—to the—"you know where I am to be found"—of modern honour; and brought to his mind the dignified moderation of Philip, who, when told at his own court by an Athenian ambassador, that the greatest service he could render the Athenians, would be to hang himself, calmly said: "Go, tell your superiors, that those who dare make use of such insolent language, are more haughty and less peaceably inclined, than those who can forgive them."

This paternal lecture was given in the streets, as Aubrey, leaning on his son, conducted him homeward to Albemarle-street. The trick of Jacob to procure his wife at a low price, and Sir Kit's sneezing, created

created at first some amusement and laughter in the nursery, where Aubrey and Arthur found Mrs. Aubrey, the girls, Arthur-William, and Mrs. Miller. But Arthur seriously repeated his sorrow for the folly he had been guilty of, which led to a consideration of the injury likely to accrue from the malice of Sir Christopher. As Aubrey's judgment had been deceived in one instance, and that rendered so public, it was natural to fear, that general doubts might be spread, and the sale considerably injured. Not that Aubrey, or any of his family, could have a wish to impose a single painting on a purchaser, for what it was not; but should he himself have been generally imposed upon, and his pictures fail him, his hopes would vanish, his plans be frustrated, and instead of a fund to support a decent appearance at Mariton till he became the Rector, he might not receive enough to pay

pay his debts in town, and carry him to his curacy.

Mortified by the events of the morning, he felt no desire to return to the auction, and leaving the whole business to the ability and management of Mr. Flourish, whom he had desired to dispose of all the paintings without reserve, he passed the rest of the day in conversing with his family, and in adjusting his accounts for payment. Having examined all the bills, he found the amount of their totals to be twelve hundred pounds and a little more. This was exclusive of his servants' wages for the last quarter, and of rent for the whole year, which, together with an allowance for articles not stated in his computation, he estimated at a sum, that would make, with the bills, fifteen hundred pounds. In spite of the general equality of Aubrey's spirits, he remained in a very anxious

xious state of suspense, from the moment he concluded this estimate, till he received the auctioneer's statement of the product of his sale. The removal of his suspense increased his anxiety ; for having yielded himself to the dominion of hope on this occasion, far more fully than he had ever done on any former one, his depression was proportionally deeper, when he became acquainted with the extent of his finances, as shown at the bottom of Flourish's account ; where, instead of twelve thousand pounds, he read three thousand two hundred and fifty. From this sum his alarmed imagination instantly subtracted fifteen hundred, which left but one thousand seven hundred and fifty, and he at the same moment recollected with horror, that in his deductions, he had included neither the check which had gone off with Elton, nor the sum at which the spurious Madonna had been

been knocked down, which together, left him six hundred pounds in debt to Sensitive.

Mrs. Aubrey was at first equally disappointed and unhappy, but the inutility of repining, and the fear of injuring the spirits of their beloved children, aided the natural tendency of their minds to resignation in lessening the force of this blow. After experiencing a while the vexation which resulted from their disappointment, they began to consider the fair side of their lot; they had still a fund in hand, which though small, would enable them to make their family comfortable at Mariton, and it could not be very long before their income would be increased by the friendship of Lord Aynsford. In the mean time they determined, as soon as they got to the Rectory, to lay down a system of domestic economy, to which they would rigorously

rigorously adhere. The hopes that followed these reflections and resolutions, not only restored the complacency of Aubrey's mind, and that of his amiable Emily, but imparted unusual spirits. They repeated their unaltered affection for each other, said and felt that it had experienced no diminution from that ardent love with which they had been mutually inspired in the Cambridgeshire cottage, gaily rejoined their children, and, instead of bewailing the effects of Sir Kit's villany, found subjects of merriment in the baronet's follies, in the imposition of Jacob's wife on the many connoisseurs who had admired the Madonna, and in the ridiculous, unsuccessful trick of the stockbroker to purchase his wife's picture for a trifle.

The spring was now advancing; for some time the young people had been feeding their imagination with the pleasures.

scenery of the country, and in every casual glimpse of verdure caught in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, anticipated the enjoyment of the rural scenery around Mariton. Impatient for their flight, they had not only exhorted Mrs. Miller to diligence in packing up, but busily assisted her, and every thing was ready for departure before the sale of the pictures took place.

Disgusted with town, from the incidents which had lately occurred, and sharing the pleasing anticipations of his family, Aubrey had nothing to detain him; he therefore gave orders to Cæsar to see all the packages, which were directed to be left at Loughborough, safely delivered at the warehouse of the Leicester waggon immediately, and to take care that the travelling coach was in perfect order for the journey. He now waited only to receive the sum his
paintings

paintings had produced, which was collected without delay. Having placed it in the hands of a banker, his first care was to discharge his debts. This was soon done among those who considered the payment of money as the criterion of integrity, but not so easily accomplished with one who imagined that the sure and lasting possession of wealth consisted only in that which is given away; a position which, however paradoxical and silly in the opinion of some modern wise men, has descended to us through many centuries as the maxim of an ancient sage*. Charles Sensitive, a youth of fortune, born in the reign of George III. early an orphan, and liberally educated, had received from nature a set of nerves formed to impress the truth of the sage's paradox on his mind, and the money he had parted with

* Quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes.

on benevolent occasions always gave him more enjoyment than the reflection of the fortune he inherited. An only child, unincumbered with debts and portions, unexpensive in his habits, and having much more than he wanted, he could perceive no wisdom in curbing an emotion so delightful in itself, and in the indulgence of which he foresaw no ill-consequence; for though his hand was open as his heart, he was aware that it would be imprudent and foolish to diminish his means, and the danger to which he was exposed did not proceed from indiscriminate or thoughtless generosity, so much as from an unsuspicious disposition, which led him to repose full confidence in whomever he thought worthy to be called his friend. The securities into which he had entered, hinted at by Mr. Cowper, had never molested his thoughts, for he did not conceive they would

would implicate him; and the sums he had disposed of, without a desire of return, were so much amassed, in the sense of the maxim, the spirit of which was congenial to his soul.

When Aubrey called upon him to take leave, and to return the money for the check, and that paid to Flourish for the purchase of the Madonna, Sensitive, far from viewing it as a criterion of uprightness, saw with pain that his friend came to deprive him of part of his treasure. He debated the point a considerable time; and at length Aubrey was obliged to compromise the matter, by suffering him to retain Jacob's wife, which he persisted in valuing highly as the production of a genius, though not of Raphael, provided he would receive the three hundred pounds he had lent, the loss of which, he was striving to add to his store, by arguing, rather jesuitically,

cally, that Aubrey had not touched a shilling of it, *ergo*, it would be a great hardship to pay three hundred pounds for nothing, and it was no time for him to be so nice. The business being thus settled, though Aubrey was secretly determined always to consider himself in debt to his friend, the amount he had paid for the painting, they took an affectionate leave of each other, and the benevolent Sensitive promised to visit Mariton in the autumn.

Prepared for their journey, the Aubreys, who had by no means yet divested themselves of the habits of fashionable life, debated the important question of taking leave of their acquaintances in due form ; and it was resolved, in spite of the causes of disgust which had occurred, to go through the usual ceremony. Accordingly, a few days were lost in rapid visits to those families, whom

they considered as the most friendly; and, in delivering cards, *pour prendre congé*, at houses which they had no desire of ever entering more.

The day fixed for their departure arrived: the servants had previously received their wages, with the advance of a month, but waited to see the family off; for though they had lived with them only a short time, they had seen enough to respect and to love. The old travelling coach with four horses drew up to the door, followed by a post-chaise and pair. The imperials being fastened on the roof of the coach, and the luggage tied on, the key of the house was delivered to the landlord who had received his rent, and had attended at Aubrey's desire, to take possession of the premises. Mrs. Aubrey, Arthur, Emily, Arthurina, and Arthur-William, with Mrs. Miller, went into the coach; and Aubrey,

brey, with Cæsar, took possession of the post-chaise. The tears and blessings of the domestics attended their departure, as they drove from the door, bidding a long adieu to London.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Gloomy Prospects. The Rector of Mariton.
His Manner of receiving Aubrey.*

“Joy and grief decide characters. What gives its zest to prosperity, what embitters adversity marks the master-passion of the heart, the object of which forms the grand interest of existence, the God of this life—the vortex, the centre, the comparative point from which we set out, on which we fix, to which we irresistibly return—that for the loss of which we are inconsolable ; that which we rescue from the gripe of danger with equal anxiety and boldness.” It is evident, that the two prevailing passions which sometimes combine to rule the same heart,

and sometimes divide their dominion over men at the period of life which Aubrey had attained, bore no sway, either united or separate, over his mind. Neither power, nor wealth, was the object of his idolatry; and he had never had occasion till very lately, to consider them as means for heightening or securing that which gave to his life its chief energy and value. He had shared the common enjoyments of fashionable society, without feeling them of much importance: but his soul was wrapt up in family-affection; his wife, and his children, were his idols. On his prosperity, they had bestowed all the relish it possessed; they had rendered him indifferent to every other: even the Being to whom in his youth, he had, perhaps inconsiderately, dedicated his service, though revered and periodically worshipped, had comparatively excited lukewarm emotions, such
as

as suffered him without pain to neglect his professional duties, to permit merry blasphemies to pass unchecked, and to confine the diffusion of religious hope to his own family. The joy they had given to his prosperity, was now damped by the change of his fortune, and the fears which assailed his imagination. Though he had no desire for wealth, though he, and every one of his family, could relinquish luxury without a sigh, he could not so easily reflect on the loss of respect and consideration, which he saw was likely to attend the loss of fortune. He had already experienced some degree of it, and fancy was busy in presenting him new mortifications at Mariton, in which the beloved objects of his heart, would probably be personally included. While he was under the impression of these thoughts, his grief would rise to a degree of emotion he had never felt before ; and

notwithstanding his natural equality of temper, they had frequently recurred during the two last days in town. He determined, however, to veil his feelings, and had succeeded tolerably well; yet, he feared his dejection would show itself in spite of his efforts, on a long journey in the same carriage; and he had, therefore, put Arthur into the coach, and taken his seat beside his faithful Cæsar. His restraint was thus removed, and he yielded himself to the anxiety of his mind, and to anticipations of possible indignities. Among other things, his imagination dwelt on the mortifying degradation of his first interview with his employer, in which he figured to himself the practical lessons he should receive on the difference between a rector and a curate.

These painful emotions were sometimes broken and relieved by reflexions
on

on the treasure he possessed in such a wife as his Emily, in such children as were growing up into men and women around him. Young as they were, he assured himself, that he could rely on the strength of their minds for happiness, independent of the opinion of the whole world, if that opinion were the base offspring of caprice and prejudice. "They are," "healthy and pure, Cæsar," cried he abruptly, after being long absorbed in thought—"they have excellent faculties, their minds are improved, their souls are replete with love and virtue. My Emily and I, can complete their education—Oh, excellent mother! Oh, endearing wife!—Then, there is Miller, and you, my faithful Cæsar: what have I to fear? we are a world ourselves: we will defy the greater one, and be happy in spite of its frowns." As Aubrey spoke, the emotion which had forced its way in words, had also impel-

led his hand to seize and press the arm of Cæsar. The pressure was felt at the worthy fellow's heart, and tears started to his eyes. "Master!" said he, "I
"very sorry to see you unhappy, it
"no for me to advise you; but, re-
"member what you have so often said
"yourself."—"What's that Cæsar?"—
"You no tell mass' Arthur and Miss
"Emily, that fancy make more unhap-
"piness, than real misfortune?"—
"Very true, Cæsar; and we do, indeed,
"suffer ourselves unworthily to be made
"the sport of fancy; but I never had
"cause before, to admit the fears that
"have lately tormented me."—"What,
"you fear, my Massa?"—"The conse-
"quences of poverty, my good Cæ-
"sar."—"Eh! Massa! how you can
"talk so? You have 'nough to live
"upon yet, and well too, wid care.
"Massa, I will look to every ting very
"carefully—

“carefully—I will see dat noting shall
“waste.”—“I know you will, Cæsar,”
said Aubrey, again pressing the poor fel-
low’s arm; “but the dread of want is
“not the thought that pains me. I
“hope, we shall never feel that; but,
“there are other consequences of po-
“verty; neglect, derision: nor would
“these affect me; but, as they will in-
“volve those who are dearer to me than
“myself—your mistress, my children.”
“—Every body will love them,” cried
Cæsar, warmly—“every body will love
“them—they never proud themselves,
“nobody is going to be proud to them;
“and, if some should be so foolish, my
“mistress, will make them keep their
“distance.”—“Yes, Cæsar,” said Au-
brey, “we are right; and that was pre-
“cisely the thought that roused me from
“my reverie. We have real happiness
“within ourselves, and we shall be the

“ more sure of preserving it, by excluding all who are likely to contaminate it.”

As he spoke the words, the chaise drove into the town of Leicester, and Aubrey soon alighted at the principal inn.

The family had passed a night at Bedford, and when they proceeded the next day, Aubrey, taking the lead in the post-chaise, pushed on to bespeak apartments. These being secured, he enquired of the landlord for Dr. Searle. “ I saw him this morning, Sir,” said the landlord—“ he regularly rides out every day in his post-chaise with his niece : he is just the same as he has been for years past, neither better nor worse— we have a fine air here, Sir, and Mr. Polson, the apothecary, says, the Doctor’s plain puddings and punctual exercise, will certainly prolong his life through another generation. Yes, Sir, he goes down hill very gently, and
“ the

"the slower the steeper the pitch." Aubrey never heard an allusion to the decline of the Rector of Mariton's life, without an awkward sensation; for though he knew his heart incapable of an immoral wish, he could not but feel, that the temporal interest of his family was connected with the eternal preferment of the incumbent; and he often ejaculated, "God forgive me!" without the guilt, for the pardon of which he prayed. "Does he ever go to Mariton?" said Aubrey.—"Never, Sir," replied the landlord, "he would not recover the journey. He is as regular as clock-work in every thing: in the distance he rides, in the quantity he eats, in the time he sleeps. It is what keeps him alive, Sir."—"What," asked Aubrey, "is the distance to Mariton?" "Fifteen miles, Sir; it is a little beyond Loughborough, to the left of the turn-
E 5 "pike

“ pike-road. It is one of the pleasantest villages in England, and there is a great number of genteel families in, and near it.” After a few more inquiries, Aubrey dismissed the landlord, by desiring him to tell Cæsar, to bring in his writing-desk. Though Mariton was but one stage farther, it was his intention to remain at Leicester, till the parsonage was ready for his family ; and, however unpalatable, it was incumbent upon him to pay his respects to the Rector, before he proceeded. He accordingly wrote a note to Dr. Searle, informing him of his arrival, and requesting to know, when it would be convenient for him to receive a visit.

While his messenger was gone with the letter, the coach arrived, and Aubrey, surrounded by his family, felt his spirits influenced by the smiles and gaiety which never failed to attend them
They

They declared their joy at quitting London, talked of the pleasure they had experienced in the course of their journey, and wished dinner was ready, for country air and travelling, had made them as keen as hawks. As they were going to sit down to table, the messenger returned with an answer from Dr. Searle, who expressed his satisfaction at Aubrey's arrival, and requested the favour of his company that evening, hoping also, that he would stay to supper. This note, which was written in a style very different from what Aubrey expected, was highly agreeable to the whole group, and gave an additional relish to their repast.

Dr. Searle had led a life which the world had suffered to pass without reproach, and which he could himself contemplate with satisfaction. His independence, his charity, the gentleness

of his manners, and his neutrality in politics, or rather his sincerity, which exalted him above party, and convinced men of different opinions, that he was solely influenced by truth and general good, had conciliated the good-will of all; and the consciousness of having performed his duties to the best of his ability, of having befriended the poor, and of having set an example to the rich, left him at peace with his own mind. The early mastery of his passions, and his temperance in the enjoyment of the good things of this world, had preserved him from bodily sufferings; and his approach to the termination of his life was the gentle progress of unthwarted nature. His faculties were in their wane, his frame was enfeebled, but the grave had no terrors for him, and he was descending to it with ease and cheerfulness. It was not till his voice became inaudible,

ble, and his attention wavering, that he entirely resigned his pulpit; and taking the advice of his friends, gave up his remaining years to repose of body and of mind. His understanding, which had been endowed with excellent powers, still possessed a great degree of its elasticity, and his conversation, though unequal, retained a sufficient charm to attract both old and young, so that he continued to have what company he chose, and whenever he pleased. At the time he became acquainted with Mr. Cowper by means of his nephew, as we have seen, he was turned of sixty; but the vigour of his constitution was unimpaired, he was active in the exercise of his faculties, his preaching and his practice were consistent, and while these endeared him to the poor, his fortune and his manners ensured him welcome among the rich. Cowper, when he received
his

his pupils from him, was impressed with a high respect for him, and had in his turn created an esteem which was followed by a warm reciprocal attachment. He had occasionally visited the old gentleman with his wards, a custom which he afterwards kept up when the young men had left him. Dr. Searle had been at the university with Aubrey's father, and during Cowper's last visit a conversation respecting the fatal will took place, which led to the renewal of the friendship between Aubrey and Cowper, as has been already related. The latter had obtained the disposal of the vacant curacy solely with the view of solacing misfortune, but was doubly gratified when he found his old fellow-student and his family possessing claims to esteem still higher than to commiseration, and he had consequently written a letter to the Rector of Mariton, bestowing

ing freely praises which he thought they merited, and which were not the less warm that the congeniality he found in his friend's circle had drawn forth from him at large the story of his own misfortunes, and the secret feelings of his heart.

Cowper's panegyric on his friends was very pleasing to the old Doctor, and prepared him to receive Aubrey with kindness and respect. On his being announced the Doctor rose from his easy chair, advanced with an engaging smile, and took him into his arms. Aubrey was a little surprised at the warmth of this reception, but his surprise soon changed to admiration, respect, and love. "I am heartily glad you are come, my son," said the Doctor; "I have been longing to see you for this week past: ever since I received our friend Cowper's letter
"I have

“ I have been wishing for your arrival.
“ I am an old man, as you see, in the
“ vale of years; but I have a warm
“ heart still for those who are worthy of
“ it, and when Cowper undertakes to
“ make friendships between men, the
“ usual ceremonies and trials are un-
“ necessary.” He then pressed Aubrey’s hand, and introduced him to his neice, Mrs. Searle, who had been reading to amuse her uncle, and to his grandneice, who was at work by her mother’s side. The former, an amiable and handsome woman, between thirty and forty, was the widow of that Mr. Searle mentioned by Mr. Cowper, and the latter, Amelia, an innocent pretty girl, about fourteen, was their only child. They received Aubrey not only politely, but with a pleasure and cordiality which could not have been more marked had he been in full possession of Aubrey, Hall.

Hall. They were no sooner seated than Mrs. Searle, with an interest which increases the charms of a handsome face, and renders an ordinary one beautiful, enquired for Mrs. Aubrey, and when the family would be at Leicester. On hearing that they were all at the inn—
“Dear me!” she exclaimed, “why
“did not you mention them in your note
“to my uncle? I should have come up
“immediately myself, to have requested
“the favour of Mrs. Aubrey to come
“to us without ceremony”—“Is it,
“think you, too late now?” said the Doctor. “Perhaps, sir,” replied Mrs. Searle, “the journey may have fatigued
“her, but at all events it is not too late
“for me to go and express our wishes.
“Come Amy, get our hats and cloaks.”
—“Do, go my dears,” said the old man,
“and if they do not come back with
“you, sit a little with them, and engage
“them

“them to dine with us to-morrow.” Mrs. Searle, saying she should return before supper, and that in the mean time she left the gentlemen to take care of each other, went away with Amelia.

How different was this reception from that presented in the despondent reveries of Aubrey. Left alone with the Doctor, he gazed with delight on the placid and smiling countenance of virtuous old age; and his imagination, purified of the chimeras of pride and debasement, of rector and curate, admitted the pleasing ideas of friendship with a faint lingering on the confines of mortality. He sat down in good humour with himself and charmed with his host, who talked chiefly of Aubrey’s father, with whom he had been acquainted at an early period of life, and of Cowper their mutual friend. Of the latter he related several anecdotes, with which Aubrey

was

was unacquainted, as proofs of the resolution and fortitude with which their friend was endowed, after the dreadful affliction which had deprived him of his reason for a considerable time. "That calamity," said the Doctor, "seemed necessary to form his character; at least, he himself dates the origin of his reflection from it, and paints his state previous to that as merely the vague guidance of sensation. He says it made him a thinking man, and immoveably fixed him in the plan of considering every future action of his life in reference to eternity. Severe then as was the blow, how great a blessing has it proved! Other calamities have appeared trifles to him; he has borne penury with patience, and reproach with resignation; he has lived on bread and water to avoid debt; he has toiled to discharge those

"contracted

“ contracted at the thoughtless period of
“ his life, and he has borne in silence the
“ unmerited calumny of the world, in
“ consideration of the shame he was
“ conscious of deserving. At the time
“ my nephew met him in London, he
“ was enduring with the fortitude of a
“ Stoic distresses under which there are
“ but few, bred as he had been, who
“ would not have sunk. From these he
“ honourably relieved himself by ren-
“ dering invaluable services to two
“ orphans, for which he received the
“ stipulated salary of a tutor; nor has it
“ been in their power or mine to pre-
“ vail upon him to accept any additional
“ recompence. He says he was over-
“ paid in being restored to an independ-
“ ence which, by rendering our offers
“ unnecessary, enforces a refusal of them.
“ But in rejecting them he voluntarily
“ solicited a species of obligation which
“ reflects

“ reflects more honour on the obliged
“ than on the obligers : the request was
“ to support him not only with our
“ purses, but with our influence, in a
“ scheme of benevolence which he had
“ planned with a hope of meriting, in
“ some degree, the atonement of his
“ sins. He goes yearly into different
“ parts of the country in quest of the
“ unfortunate ; he investigates, he veri-
“ fies their afflictions ; he states their
“ cases, he circulates them with his
“ signature. Some persons request him
“ to be the medium of relief, others
“ take pleasure in conveying it them-
“ selves. His scheme is known only to
“ a few ; but though the immedi-
“ ate patrons of it are not numerous,
“ they diffuse its influence to their
“ friends and connexions. It is not
“ always, however, that money is the
“ means of relief ; there are delicate
“ cases

“cases which require management. Ob-
“scure merit is to be protected against
“envy, the weak against the powerful,
“the slandered to be restored to repu-
“tation, malice is to be deprived of its
“sting, and the triumph of vice over
“virtue is to be reversed. Cowper is
“often fortunate enough, by putting cases
“of this kind in a clear point of view,
“to give rise to inquiries, the result of
“which crowns his benevolent aim with
“success. Then it is he glows with plea-
“sure, then he confesses his obligation
“to the supporters of his scheme, and
“feels himself favoured of heaven.”

Aubrey enjoyed this account of his
friend, and cordially united with Dr.
Searle in extolling his virtues. “I am
“much indebted to him,” said the
Doctor, “for prevailing on you to come
“into the country to commence a friend-
“ship with an old man, and to under-
“take

“ take for me those duties which I am
“ too feeble to perform myself; and I
“ hope when you are settled at Mariton,
“ that I shall often have the pleasure of
“ seeing you and your family here, for
“ though I cannot move so far, the
“ distance is nothing to young people.”
The urbanity of the Doctor’s manners,
the kindness of his language, the evident
sincerity of his sentiments, charmed the
heart of Aubrey, who, as the patriarch
spoke, inwardly blessed him: “O blessed
“ be thy age!—O rector! live for
“ ever!”

All his imaginary mortifications being
completely dissipated, it was with plea-
sure he saw Mrs. Searle and Amelia re-
turn, accompanied by his family. Mrs.
Aubrey, who knew how to be ceremoni-
ous where ceremony was necessary, was
no less skilful in judging of its necessity;
she made it the barrier of unmeaning
civility,

civility, but she possessed too warm a heart not to sacrifice it to real good, and she read at once the character of her inviters, and the unsophisticated nature of the invitation in the amiable countenances and manners of the mother and daughter. Far, therefore, from framing any excuse, she was delighted to show her readiness to cultivate the regard of the Doctor and his family, and leaving Arthur-William to the care of Mrs. Miller, resigned herself with Arthur and the two girls to the charge of Mrs. Searle. The old gentleman was charmed with this mark of attention; the evening was spent in pleasant and friendly conversation, and Mrs. Aubrey was soon as much delighted with the Doctor as her husband was. It was natural that Mariton should be talked of, and the Aubreys learned that they were expected there with much impatience; for they

had been mentioned as likely to be the inhabitants of the parsonage, even before Cowper had reached London, or proposed the curacy to Aubrey; and Mr. Dodson, the late curate, having received intelligence of his acceptance of it as soon as Cowper's letter arrived, had confirmed the news, and was only waiting his arrival at Mariton to leave it, in order to go to the vicarage to which he had been presented. On hearing this, Aubrey said, that not knowing the state of the parsonage-house, he had intended to leave his family at Leicester, till he had prepared for their reception at Mariton, but that he would proceed early in the morning, that he might release him. "By all means," said the Doctor, "leave Mrs. Aubrey to the care of my niece, and go yourself: Mr. Dodson will put you in possession of the church on Sunday, which is only

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“ the day after to-morrow. You will
“ see the state of your house, order in
“ what may be necessary for your fa-
“ mily, and return to us in the beginning
“ of the week.” This was accordingly
determined upon, and at ten o’clock,
the hour at which the Doctor regularly
retired, the Aubreys took leave for the
night, and went back to the inn. The
family were unanimous in their opinion
of their host : “ What a fine old man !
“ what a good old man ! what a friendly
“ soul !” was echoed from one to the
other. “ God bless his dear old heart !”
said Mrs. Aubrey. “ Amen !” said
Aubrey ; “ long may it be ere I ex-
“ perience the friendship of Lord Ayns-
“ ford ! O rector ! live for ever !”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Aubrey's Reception at Mariton. The Family arrive at the Parsonage.

AUBREY'S reception at Leicester, and the impatience with which he was expected at Mariton, wrought a great change in his spirits. He wondered, that he had been able to shut his eyes to the incontestable right of his family to distinguished notice; to overlook the intrinsic merit of an amiable group, whose manners could not but produce a reciprocity of regard and respect; and he even reproached himself with a degree of illiberality, in taking the silly conduct of those who had been led by Sir Kit

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Keeping, as the criterion for his judgment of the rest of the world. His reception at Mariton, was as gratifying to his pride, as that at Leicester had been agreeable to his worthier emotions. He and Arthur went over in a post chaise, attended by Cæsar, who rode on horseback. They drove immediately to the parsonage, where they were received with great politeness by Mr. Dodson, who, while he put Aubrey in possession of a handsome house, requested to be considered as his host, till he returned for his family. The morning was agreeably passed in examining the premises, and in making an arrangement for such articles of furniture as Aubrey wanted, and Mr. Dodson was willing to part with. It may be remembered, that the former had no household furniture; what he possessed before his uncle's death having been disposed of when the family went

went abroad, as it would be out of fashion before their return to England. It was therefore Aubrey's intention to see his house first, order what he might want immediately, in the neighbourhood, and write to London for what could not be obtained in the country. This design was in a great measure rendered unnecessary by his having the option of entering the house nearly completely furnished. The moveables that had been put in by Mr. Dodson, were good and fashionable; but, there were a variety of articles which had been long stationary, and which he had purchased from the Rector. These formed a considerable part of the furniture, and though they were not fashionable, they possessed a simple dignity derived from their appearance, and from the proprietors to whom they had belonged, which had always obtained them more admiration

than the lighter ornaments of modern taste. They consisted of massy wardrobes, marble slabs and vases, mahogany tables, large mirrors, and china jars. When Aubrey expressed his intention to include these articles, Mr. Dodson informed him, that Dr. Searle had repurchased them as soon as he knew of his preferment; but said, at the same time, that he had no doubt, that the Doctor would let him have them. Having settled that the rest should be appraised on the Monday following, Mr. Dodson proposed a ride round the adjacent country before dinner. As Arthur soon conducted his sisters through the environs of Mariton; it is unnecessary here to say more upon the subject of its scenery, than that he and his father were pleased with all they saw. At dinner, they were joined by two gentlemen of the neighbourhood, whose polite attentions were to
Aubrey,

Aubrey, an earnest of the agreeable society, he and his family would enjoy in his new residence.

Aubrey, though not in the habit of performing the church-service, had occasionally, while residing at Aubrey-hall, both read and preached at Chelmsford, and was always admired in the desk as well as in the pulpit. The deep clear tones of his voice will not have escaped the memory of those who were pleased with his voluntary counterpoints, to the sacred airs sung by Miss Melvil, the morning he unexpectedly broke in on the slander-stricken maid, in the Cambridgeshire cottage: they had lost none of that melodious roundness which had surprised and delighted his Emily. To this advantage bestowed by nature, he had early added those which are to be obtained by application: his sentences flowed with ease, the emphatic words duly received

their force, without preposterous violence, and the inflexions of his voice were harmonious. In syllabic accent and polite pronunciation he was uncommonly correct, having taken much pleasure in attending to the best speakers in the senate, whose style was his standard for reforming the deviations that sprung up in the pulpit, at the bar, and on the stage. In delivering a discourse, he had energy with little gesture: he impressed the truths for which he argued, by feeling, and appearing to feel them; but his zeal never approached to vehemence. The conviction he manifested in his countenance, was his most powerful personal agency in convincing others, and he always addressed the congregation in that natural earnest manner, which is the result of conviction.

As it had been settled almost immediately on Aubrey's arrival at the parsonage,

age, that he should read the prayers next day, and Mr. Dodson preach his farewell sermon, which he had prepared in the beginning of the week, it was soon generally known, that the new curate was to officiate, and when Aubrey took possession of the desk, he had the pleasure of seeing a numerous congregation, a great part of which appeared to consist of persons of distinction. The affability that reigned on the countenances of these, and the general satisfaction which manifested itself in every part of the church at the end of the liturgy, now filled Aubrey's breast with emotions the very reverse of those which had been produced by the gloomy reveries of his journey; and he glowed with delight at the thought of the smiles, the attentions, the respect, the happiness, in reserve for his beloved Emily and her children. Mr. Dodson's sermon made at first a mournful impression, for he was

much respected, but the subject of sorrow was doubly counteracted by the consideration of his removal being the consequence of preferment, and by his vacancy being filled by one, who appeared so able to supply his place. In the afternoon, Aubrey again read prayers, and again his congregation was as numerous as in the morning. The remainder of the day was passed at the parsonage-house, in company with several gentlemen, who had been invited by Mr. Dodson to meet Aubrey. Every thing seemed to conspire to gratify his feelings; he was pressed to bring his family immediately, and Arthur being requested to remain at Mariton, while his father went for them, accepted the invitation. Aubrey was himself, impatient to see his Emily and his children settled in their new abode, enjoying the country, and participating his pleasures; he,

he, therefore, staid no longer with Mr. Dodson than was necessary to conclude the purchase of his furniture. The estimate, as proposed, was made early in the forenoon of Monday. It amounted to three hundred and twenty pounds, for which Aubrey gave Mr. Dodson a draft on his banker in London. He then took leave of his worthy predecessor, who promised to wait till Wednesday for the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Aubrey, and leaving Arthur with him, set off for Leicester, with Cæsar, in a post-chaise, which the latter had hired at Loughborough.

He found all his family at the house of the Rector, by whom he was again welcomed with the affection of a father. The account he gave of his excursion, was extremely pleasing, both to the Searles, and to his own family. During his absence, Mrs. Aubrey and his girls,

had seen several agreeable families, had been at church, and visited the castle, near which the Doctor's house stood, being in the Newark. Pleasantly however as they passed their time, Emily and Arthurina were secretly impatient to join their brother, nor was Mrs. Aubrey sorry to find, that Mr. Dodson's situation would fully excuse her not accepting Mrs. Searle's invitation to spend the week at Leicester; and the stay of the family was accordingly limited to another day, in the course of which, Aubrey in vain urged the Rector to dispose of the articles of furniture that he had repurchased of Mr. Dodson. Dr. Searle said, that though he had been prevailed upon to sell them, he had always felt ashamed of it; for, they were such things as seemed to go naturally with the house, and that he should now consider them in that light. They should
be

be at the service of the family as long as they occupied the parsonage; but he had resolved never to sell them again. Aubrey was under the necessity of acquiescing in this determination, and the party having taken an affectionate leave of their amiable friends on Tuesday night, left the inn next morning, Aubrey, in great spirits, filling Arthur's place in the coach, which Cæsar followed on horseback. The road lying through a pleasant country, the travellers were gratified with the prospects, which increased the gaiety they set out with. The kindness they had experienced, with what they saw, what they had seen, and what remained to be seen, excited their imaginations, and they remarked, narrated, and anticipated, with the volubility of gay and happy minds. Arthur-William was not the least talkative, nor was Mrs. Miller frugal of joyous expressions; yet,

as Arthur and Mr. Dodson handed out Emily and Arthurina at the parsonage, she could not help shaking her head, and saying to her mistress, who sat fronting her in the coach, "S'bidlikins! this is only too like our jaunts to Aubrey-hall."

CHAPTER XXX.

The Parsonage. Economical Arrangements. The Minister of Religion. The Magnanimity of a candid Confession of Error. The Choice of a Profession recommended to Arthur.

THAT the arrival of a new rector or a vicar should set the parish bells in motion is not surprising or uncommon, but it does not often fall to the lot of a curate to be rung into his curacy: the rattling, however, of a coach and four into the village, levelled the distinction, and Mariton steeple vibrated with as loud and continued peals as it had ever resounded with before. The family took possession of their abode with undiminished dignity, the illiberal malice
of

of the Pall-mall baronet was forgotten, and Aubrey was himself again. Mr. Dodson took his leave early, as he purposed to sleep at Leicester, but before he went recommended his cook and housemaid to Mrs. Aubrey, who, from the character he gave of them, was glad to take them into her service: thus almost every thing that was wanted seemed prepared without trouble, and as it were by enchantment. The packages from London arrived at Loughborough the day before, and were immediately forwarded to Mariton.

Left to themselves, the Aubreys soon explored every part of their mansion, ran over the garden, and strolled through the fields belonging to the parsonage. The remainder of the week, as they had few visitors, none indeed but the gentlemen whom Aubrey had met by Mr. Dodson's invitation, was devoted to putting

putting the house in order, making economical arrangements, and settling the disposition of their time. The plate and china were ceremoniously bestowed in their proper places, the books intellectually classed on the shelves found in the study, the piano and harp harmoniously established in the sitting-room on the ground-floor, and the organ erected in the large room over it. The house being a double one, was sufficiently commodious, though but of two stories, with slanting garrets. There were bed-rooms enough for the family, and two spare ones. The large room on the first floor, looking on the garden and over the country, had been rendered spacious, at the expence of the adjoining one, which was a small bedroom allotted to Arthur. When the organist of Mariton, who lived at Loughborough, and was employed to
place

place the organ, had completed his work, exceeding great was the joy of the whole family, and chaunts, hymns, and anthems, filled up the day. The ground-floor of the parsonage was laid out thus : the entrance was a small hall, on the right of which was the study, and on the left the dining-room, which had a second door opening into the sitting-room ; at the end of the hall a passage led to the garden, and another to the right led past the offices and kitchen to the court-yard. The sitting-room was well proportioned, and had a glass door, which opened on a lawn, edged with flower-beds and shrubs, very gently descending to a small beautiful river, one of the banks of which was formed by its turf. This was the trout-stream mentioned by Mr. Cowper.

The view of the country from the windows of the house, which backward faced
the

the south, was rendered rich by woods and fine pastures; but there was an object about half a mile distant, on the opposite side of the river, which heightened the pleasing landscape into a picturesque scenery. This was the ruins of an old castle, on an elevated, unequal, rocky piece of ground, which for many acres was unfit for cultivation. It belonged originally to one of those powerful and haughty barons of this kingdom, who had proved themselves such formidable subjects in the early reigns after the conquest. The great duke of Lancaster afterwards became the lord of it, but it was entirely neglected, and gradually fell into ruin. Many murders having been committed within the walls, it is not wonderful that it should have become a haunted place by tradition, and it still continued stamped with the reputation. It was rarely visited by the country

country people in the day-time, and never approached by night. Though the soil near it denied a supply of juices to useful vegetation, some hardy shrubs here and there concealed the sides round the bottom of the castle, many parts of the mouldering walls were clothed with ivy, and though no trees stood near it, the perspective of the wood beyond gave it, from the parsonage, an appearance of an immense pile on the skirt of a forest. It furnished a very sublime point of view to most of the houses in the neighbourhood of Mariton, but from none did it appear finer than from the parsonage. This prospect was an object of high estimation with the Aubrey family, nor were they satisfied with gazing at it; they explored its recesses, and enjoyed the solemnity of the spacious chambers, some of which were nearly overhung with the deep green tapestry of the ivy,
and

and roofed by the contracted firmament settling on the lofty parapets. The extreme dimensions of the building, the thickness of the walls, the magnitude of the apartments, the purpose of the fortifications, the projections of the towers, the tottering turrets, the rugged scite, the solitude to which superstition had doomed it, and the silence reigning around and in every part of the castle, raised those emotions of wonder and admiration, which while they distinguish mankind from brutes, are in a higher degree peculiar to the sons and daughters of taste. The sublime and beautiful thus combined on the face of the country to delight the inhabitants of the parsonage, health and harmony reigned within, and the testimonies of respect, with the pleasures of society, only waited the ceremonial of public appearance.

Meanwhile, Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey resolved to settle their establishment on the most frugal plan, and accordingly consulted, before the young people and Mrs. Miller, on the necessary arrangements. "Economy," said Aubrey, "is of importance in all situations of life, and of the utmost consequence in those where errors are not to be retrieved by further plans of retrenchment, but complete ruin is the sure result of excess. Let us then resolve to begin our residence here with the utmost care and circumspection. It is true we have a prospect in the friendship of Lord Aynsford, but when it may be realized is uncertain, and the dear Doctor Searle has taught us to dread the event that is to precede it. My dear Emily! my dear children! I know your hearts
" are

“are superior to the temptations of
“luxury; I know that you value the
“pleasures of the palate so low, that
“frugality in diet will scarcely be a
“virtue in you; but it will be of great
“moment in the distribution of our
“expences.”—“Oh! my dear papa!”
cried Emily, “we none of us care for
“eating and drinking. While we have
“music and books”—“And rambles
“through the country,” added Arthur-
rina; “and rambles, as Arthurina says,”
continued Emily; “and pleasant neigh-
“bours, and sometimes a dance,” said
Arthur. “O yes,” continued Emily,
“and dances, as my brother says.”—
“And turkies and tarts,” added Ar-
thur-William. The little fellow’s addi-
tion created a hearty laugh. “I have
“not finished my speech,” cried Emily.
“With music, books, country walks,
“and dancing, who would ever think of
“eating

"eating and drinking? As for my part,
"I could live upon bread and cheese all
my life."—"So could I," cried Arthur-
rina, "with a few vegetables, and there
"is plenty in the garden."—"A little
"solid meat, however, after a walk,"
said Arthur, "will not be amiss. I
"don't mind eating, but mine is not a
"vegetable stomach, Emily; particu-
"larly after exercise."—"I," said Ar-
thur William, "like the ducks and green
"pease we had yesterday; what say
"you, 'Sbidlikins?"—"They were
"very nice, indeed, sir," said Mrs.
Miller, "and as I shall superintend the
"poultry-yard, you shall often have
"them; 'Sbidlikins! I think poultry be
"the best and cheapest fare in the coun-
"try."—"But Mrs. 'Sbidlikins," said
Arthur, "we must have a butcher."—"I
"hate a butcher," cried Arthur-
William.—"Tell me why," said his
brother.

brother. "Because he is so cruel," replied Arthur-William. Mrs. Aubrey, who let no opportunity slip of removing prejudices from the minds of her children the moment they appeared, asked him if the cook was cruel. "No, that she is not," replied he, "she looks so good-natured, and speaks so good-temperedly, ~~and~~ she feeds the chickens."—"And ~~she~~, my love," said his mother, "killed the ducks we had for dinner yesterday?"—"I don't know, mamma."—"They were killed, you know."—"To be sure."—"Then ask Miller who killed them."—"Sbide likins!" said Arthur-William to Mrs. Miller, "who killed them?"—"Indeed, sir," said she, "it was Nanny." He stared. "Now listen to me, and remember what I am going to say," continued his mother.—"It is more cruel to take dislikes without reason,
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“ than to flay an ox. Indeed you will
“ find that there is no cruelty in the
“ one, and there certainly is in the
“ other. We cannot live without food,
“ and God has thought proper, how-
“ ever irreconcilable it seems with the
“ tenderness of some hearts, to appoint
“ animals to be a part of food. I will
“ not enter into the reasons at present :
“ your brother and your sisters know
“ them, and so will you by and by, but
“ I merely tell it you now to prevent
“ your growing up with such a pre-
“ judice. Prejudice, you know, is hav-
“ ing wrong notions of things, from not
“ enquiring into truth, by which you
“ may become ridiculous or disgusting,
“ or even wicked. If Providence has
“ given animals for our food, the person
“ who provides meat for the table may
“ have a very disagreeable office, but
“ cannot be charged with cruelty, if he
“ does

“ does not wantonly give pain. It is, I
“ own, an office that a mild disposition
“ would be unwilling to take ; but only
“ observe what would be the case if
“ every body’s heart was so tender that
“ they would not hurt any thing that has
“ life ; *you* would have no ducks, and
“ Arthur would have no mutton : and as
“ Nanny is not cruel, ~~no~~ more is the
“ butcher, if he is a ~~good~~ man. Take
“ care of prejudice, my dear Arthur-
“ William ; will you, for my sake ?”—
“ I will, mamma,” cried he, “ and I
“ won’t hate a good butcher any more.”

The family laughed at the simple equivocation of Authur-William, and Aubrey resumed his observations on the proposed economy of the house. After a few more remarks on the wholesomeness of plain food, it was resolved, *nem. con.* never to have more on their table, when they were alone, than a joint and

a pudding, or some of their own poultry, with the seasonable produce of their garden.

They next proceeded to discuss the consumption of grocery ; when it was resolved that tea, coffee, and sugar, were absolutely necessaries, but that a great reduction should be made in the articles of spicery. Coal and candle came next under consideration : with respect to the former, it was found that they could not do without a fire in the kitchen, in the sitting-room, in the dining-parlour, and in the study ; but then it was settled that the other rooms of the house should only be aired occasionally ; and with respect to lights, it was resolved that it would be extravagant to burn wax, when they had not company. The cellar it was determined should have a certain supply, but not to be frequently resorted to. Barrels of good table-beer should stand

stand in the outer vault, for the constant use of the servants, while a stout-bodied ale was to be kept for extraordinary occasions. Some of the binns were to be filled with good old port and sherry; and a place was allotted to spirituous liquors of the best quality. The wine-decanter and liquor-case were always to be put on the table after the cloth was taken away, but the family were to be very indifferent whether they drank any or not, unless they had a friend with them. As to dress, it fortunately appeared that Mrs. Aubrey and the girls were so well stocked with clothes and materials for making them, that they would want little in addition for a considerable time; and Aubrey and Arthur had left their measure in London with their tailor, to whom they proposed to send occasional orders.

These points being discussed and settled, it remained to be debated what was to be done as to moving about the country. Prudence evidently required that they should lay down their carriage for the present ; but the necessity of going from one place to another as imperiously demanded the use of horses. At first, they could none of them see how it would be possible to do without them ; but then not less than three would be requisite, for there must be a saddle-horse for Cæsar, as well as a pair for the coach ; and neither three nor two could be supported on the fields annexed to the parsonage, unless they gave up the idea of keeping cows. Two cows and one horse might very well be fed on the land, buying oats for the nag, but it could no more. Either the cows, with all the rich cream, the butter, the milk, puddings,

puddings, custards, and syllabubs, they would afford, were to be given up, or the horses relinquished. One alternative more indeed there was; but it was too imprudent, even in thought, to find a proposer in the economical circle, for land was very dear about Mariton. "Can't you—?" It was upon Arthurina's tongue, but she turned it off by saying, "As the paddock will keep one horse, what think you now of a *one-horse chaise of a Sunday*?" It was at length determined that their carriage should positively be laid down, but that the coach should stand in the coach-house, and be kept very nice by Cæsar, to be occasionally used, as circumstances might induce them to send for post-horses from Loughborough; and that one horse should be bought to serve either as a saddle-horse or for drawing a gig, which would be found very convenient. As

the garden was not large enough to require constant attention, it was resolved to continue the plan which had been pursued by Mr. Dodson, who agreed with a gardener to crop and keep it in order by periodical attention, occasionally having a village boy or girl to weed. But though they avoided the expence of a regular gardener, there was yet another domestic whom they could not do without; a dairy-maid was wanting, for the care of two cows was too much to add to the cook's province; and if it was too little to employ one person entirely, the girl would be found useful in assisting to keep the house clean, and in helping to wash clothes. The dairy-maid, accordingly, was soon determined upon, and Nanny, the cook, recommended her younger sister Patty, who was used to cows from her birth.

The

The household arrangements being thus made with the strictest attention to economy, Aubrey communicated to his family the serious designs he had formed respecting the sacred profession, the functions of which he had resumed. Of whatever faults he was conscious, so far from labouring to conceal them from his family, or even to extenuate them; it was his custom to turn the avowal of them to their advantage and his own. Anxious as he was to teach his children to distinguish accurately between right and wrong, he had no alternative, for it was impossible to deceive them without corrupting their minds; nor had he the least fear of weakening their respect for him, by observing, "these are errors; " I must endeavour to repair them as well as I can, and you must ever avoid falling into the like;" on the contrary, he knew that such confessions,

guided by such motives, gave him a higher claim to their esteem. "Emily, " my love," said he to Mrs. Aubrey, " how negligent have I been of my " profession! but I do not wonder, " when I consider the motives on which " I embraced it. I consented to assume " the sacred robe and band, in order to " provide for the second son of a family, " in whose representative it was thought " necessary to centre the wealth and " pride of their ancestors: when, there- " fore, by the death of my brother I be- " came that representative, is it sur- " prising that I disengaged myself from " an object no longer necessary for the " purpose for which I had obtained it? " Could I go back to the time while it " was optional, retaining the judgment " of my experience, no interest whatever " should prevail upon me to undertake " the holy office, for I should not think " myself,

“ myself, at that early period of life,
“ equal to the strict discharge of its
“ duties. It is an awful engagement;
“ the most important that man can enter
“ into, made voluntarily with his Creator,
“ to labour to instruct his fellow-crea-
“ tures in the knowledge of their eternal
“ interest, to purify their hearts, to re-
“ solve their doubts, to console them in
“ affliction, and to keep them on their
“ guard in the hours of joy and tran-
“ quillity. A minister is the viceroy
“ of the Almighty. How sublime the
“ thought! how arduous the task! who
“ that reflected upon it, would hastily
“ undertake it? What talents, what
“ virtues are requisite to form that stu-
“ pendous character which stands forth
“ the ambassador of the Deity! In the
“ course of my reflections, since my re-
“ verse of fortune, an extraordinary
“ thought occurred to me on this sub-
“ ject.

“ ject. My fancy formed a new crea-
“ ture ; I imagined the ministry of re-
“ ligion assigned to a superior order of
“ beings, continued by succession, like
“ men, on our own planet. Not a fallen,
“ nor incorporeal race ; not superior to
“ man in faculty, nor exempt from the
“ passions of the mind, but endowed
“ with a strength of virtue that should
“ preserve them genuine and good, and
“ possessed of the highest degree of
“ human knowledge and talents ; fully
“ acquainted by intuition with the nature
“ of the appetites, yet totally free from
“ them ; their frames, while existing on
“ earth, sustained by some unperceived
“ fluid inhaled with the air, and after
“ the service of fifty years, their spirits
“ translated unknown to men, leaving
“ successors to rise from their bodies by
“ a new law of nature. Of such a being
“ self-excellence and success in his minis-
“ try,

“ try would necessarily be the supreme
“ good, the end and enjoyment of his
“ existence ; to such a being the task
“ would be appropriate ; but for me,
“ scarcely arrived at years of discretion,
“ placing the chief praise of religion in
“ a rhetorical essay delivered from the
“ pulpit, bred up in ease, and fond of it ;
“ for me to dare accept the divine depu-
“ tation was no less monstrous than my
“ total neglect of it, when it became un-
“ necessary to worldly enjoyments, was
“ shameful.”—“ I fear,” said Mrs. Au-
brey, “ that I am more to blame than
“ you, yet I will not say a word in op-
“ position to the reproach you cast upon
“ yourself, for it seems to promise an
“ attention that may make amends for
“ the past ; and let me assure you, I am
“ of opinion, that in your new-created
“ being you have done nothing more
“ than paint some of the worthy heads
“ of

“ of the church, your unknown fluid
“ and new law of nature excepted.
“ Men so far, at least, superior to your
“ imaginary ministers, as they have had
“ to contend with, and have surmounted
“ those obstacles which you have so in-
“ geniously removed from your creation.
“ What think you of the bishops of * *
“ and * * ? of Dr. Searle ? of Cowper’s
“ friend, Mr. Grey ? The character may
“ not be general, but it exists, and may
“ be emulated.”—“ My imagination, I
“ allow,” replied Aubrey, “ was excited
“ by contemplating myself. You know
“ I do not mean, my dear Arthur,”
continued he, addressing his son, “ to
“ cast a reflection on the body of the
“ clergy ; they are, in general, learned
“ and pious ; yet it were to be wished
“ that our connection with the rest of
“ society were better understood, and
“ more generally realized. Prayers and
“ a lecture

“ a lecture would not constitute the office
“ of the minister I have imagined. They
“ who are about to take orders, like me,
“ merely for a provision, or who, like
“ me, having taken orders, think no
“ more of their engagement, will per-
“ haps, sooner or later, feel like me, that
“ it had been better never to have under-
“ taken the office.”—“ My dear sir,”
said Arthur, “ I have heard you before
“ condemn yourself, and I thought you
“ very good at the time ; but I am more
“ delighted than I can tell with a saying
“ of Lavater’s, which I lately read, and
“ which you now bring to my mind :
‘ He who has genius and eloquence
‘ sufficient either to cover or excuse his
‘ errors, yet extenuates not, but rather
‘ accuses himself, and unequivocally con-
‘ fesses them, approaches the circle of
‘ immortals, whom human language has
‘ dignified with the appellation of gods
‘ and

‘and saints.’ Arthur’s soul was in his face when he said this; it was one of those looks and speeches not uncommon among the Aubreys, which threw a sudden glow of pleasure around the whole circle; for their sympathy was as rapid as their love was cordial. His mother blessed him in her thought, and by her smile. His father pressed his hand and said, “This is very amiable, Arthur; I
“feel it at the bottom of my heart.
“Whatever truth or error there be in
“the aphorism you have cited, one thing
“is certain; whoever attempts to refine
“vice into the appearance of virtue, or
“pretends to appear to his family what
“he is not, forfeits his real portion of
“merit, and never fails to be discovered,
“and to be secretly, if not openly de-
“spised. It is the part of a father to
“point the way to his children; to lead
“it, as far as he can; but when he
“halts

“halts in the road to perfection, he will
“not, if he be not lost to virtue; keep
“them back, by pretending to be the
“standard of excellence. He will call
“to them to go on; he will glory as
“much, if not more, in their progress
“as in his own, and he will feel in some
“degree his defects compensated by ex-
“cellencies, the seeds of which were
“sown by him, though the fruit re-
“ceived its perfection from the native
“vigour of the soil. With respect to
“myself, I will now endeavour, as your
“mother presages, to make amends. I
“will become acquainted with all my
“parishioners, high or low, rich or
“poor; they who need a friend, an ad-
“viser, a comforter, shall find one in
“me. The public service shall be duly
“attended to, and at home we will pass
“our time in rational studies, innocent
“amusements, and hospitality. As to
“you

“ you, my dear Arthur, I wish that I
“ could send you to the university, but
“ alas ! you are deeply involved in the
“ effect of the dreadful, unaccountable
“ negligence of my uncle. It may yet
“ be in my power to enable you to finish
“ your studies there to advantage ; mean-
“ while your time will not be lost at
“ Mariton. You must choose a pro-
“ fession ; you must choose it before you
“ go to Cambridge. I would have you
“ consult your inclination in the choice,
“ and to do that you must take a cursory
“ reading of the elementary books of
“ each. This you will easily do in the
“ course of the next year. Your edu-
“ cation has given you a foundation for
“ any ; fix decidedly, then go regularly
“ to work in your application, and I
“ have no doubt you will in a few years
“ make yourself sufficiently master of
“ what you determine on, to support
“ yourself

“yourself honourably, and acquire a
“competence equal to the best enjoy-
“ments of life. You will have time
“enough for the reading I recommend,
“without giving up your classics, or
“even our general studies.”

Arthur declared his determination to follow his father's advice, and to begin with Blackstone's Commentaries. He said he should be happy to be master of a profession, not only from foreseeing that it would be necessary to his support, but because it would make him of use in the world, which not one in a thousand could be said to be of those who had no profession. In this opinion Aubrey concurred; and the girls, forgetting the previous reading recommended by their father, were for settling the choice immediately. “What will you be, Arthur?” cried Emily; and without waiting for an answer, added—“Be a
“farmer,

“farmer, and live in the country.”—
“That’s what Edmund Smyth is to be,”
cried Arthur-William, who began to be
tired of holding his tongue. This re-
collection of Arthur-William’s pro-
duced an emotion in Emily’s mind,
which she could not account for, but it
was so slight that she did not endeavour
to trace it. “Be a clergyman,” cried
Arthurina; “what can be more de-
lightful than to have such a place as
this, and to make all the people about
you good and happy?”—“If I was
Arthur, I know what I would be,”
said Arthur-William; “I would be a
lord, like Lord Aynsford, and then he
might make me a bishop.”—“Very
well,” said Arthur, “I will consider,
and tell you what I think, this time
twelvemonth.” The resolutions re-
specting the household economy were
reviewed and approved, and the Au-
breys,

breys, conscious of meaning well, gave way to the natural tendency of their minds to be pleased; were innocent, chearful, and happy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

*The Family appear at Church. Similarity of
Country Neighbourhoods.*

HOWEVER deserving of censure, a candid censurer will not perhaps think it unpardonable, that the first appearance at church was not entirely actuated by the spirit of devotion, and that heavenly views were considerably mingled with terrestrial concerns. Mrs. Aubrey and the girls certainly devoted some part of saturday to consultation on dresses for sunday; and sunday was a gala day. The mother and daughters might have been considered together as the three Graces, for though a little enbonpoint,

Mrs. Aubrey retained the fresh and blooming air of youth, her animated eyes gave great intelligence to her lovely countenance, and her easy motion supplied undiminished grace to her elegant figure. Emily was now nearly as tall as her mother, and Arthurina very little shorter. The church being near, and the morning fine, the family all went afoot. Aubrey had preceded them, and was in the reading desk when they entered. Arthur and Mrs. Aubrey, who held Arthur-William by the hand, led the way; and Emily and Arthurina followed, attended by Mrs. Miller; Cæsar, in the Aubrey livery, had gone on before to open the pew door. If the congregation drew off the thoughts of the Aubreys, they no less attracted the attention of the congregation. In the intervals of the service all eyes were turned upon the clergyman's pew, which
supplied

supplied food for the usual passions of curiosity, admiration, and envy; for Mariton, like other places, had inhabitants of various characters: however, the general feature of the day was affability.

In the pulpit, Aubrey gave as much satisfaction as in the reading-desk. His sermon was introductory, and the more interesting as the application of it might be considered as peculiarly relative to himself and his hearers. In the first part of his discourse he stated at large the duties of the minister of a parish, and the remainder of it he devoted to a concise view of the religion he had sincerely embraced on examining its evidences, and which it behoved him to support and to teach. The subjects were connected, and he treated them with that simple eloquence which is both convincing and endearing. Full of the pious resolutions he had formed, he had begun the *service
with

with unusual zeal, and as he pronounced the concluding blessing, he looked around him, and his heart glowed with the sacred affections of his office.

After church the family received many salutations from the parishioners, and were visited by the gentlemen who had dined with Aubrey and Arthur at Mr. Dodson's table, and who brought with them several of their friends, both gentlemen and ladies. These Mrs. Aubrey, on their admiring the organ, invited to return in the evening, without ceremony, to hear some sacred music. Heralds of the rest of the inhabitants, they mentioned the names of the different persons who were at church, rated their fortunes, and briefly sketched their histories. Except the names, all that the Aubreys heard was pretty much the same as they had known in other country places: a few had very large incomes,

and did not reside at Mariton more than two or three months in the year; many had good incomes, and went away only for two or three months; and some had limited incomes, and these seldom, if ever, left the place. As to character, a few were spoken of in terms of the highest panegyric, many were praised with a *but*, and some were swept off with a hint.

In all this there was nothing singular, but when Mrs. Aubrey enquired concerning the family who sat in the gallery, in the red pew, with the yellow curtains trimmed with silver fringe; after a pause, one of the ladies said: "The name of the family is Spicer; Mr. Spicer made a large fortune by trade, and has been purchasing estates in the county for many years; about five years ago he disposed of his business, and came to reside at Spicer-hall. He possesses

possesses much influence in the affairs of the county—he is a justice of peace”—
“and an orator at our meetings,” added one of the gentlemen, with a smile. The rest of the visitors laughed, except a young gentleman, who said, that Miss Spicer was one of the most elegant, accomplished, and charming girls in the kingdom. “No doubt,” said the lady who spoke first, “for she has expectations of at least thirty thousand pounds, and was educated at one of the most eminent boarding-schools in London, which she has lately left, and is just come down to Spicer-hall. It is said she plays and sings finely.”—“Oh divinely!” cried her panegyrist: “I have had the pleasure of hearing her several times since her arrival.”—“I am glad to hear it,” said Emily Aubrey. “She is esteemed a perfect beauty,” continued the lady, who now

fearing to commit herself, determined that the rest of the information respecting the Spicers should come from the mouth of Miss Spicer's admirer, to whom she addressed herself; "and full of life
"and spirits, I think Mr. Gosling?"—
"Oh yes!" replied he, "and replete
"with wit."—"Mrs. Spicer a kind
"mother?"—"Oh! very fond of
"her."—"Mrs. Spicer herself is a fine
"woman."—"Very."—"But not
"quite accordant with Mr. Spicer?"—
"Oh! hate one another like cat and
"dog."—"A pity that, for the sake of
"the family; but I hope the rest harmonize better."—"Why, faith, so so,
"but I don't know; I never interfere;
"however they disagree one with another, they are all unanimous in their
"opinion of Eudoxia; they think her
"the most beautiful, the most accomplished, and loveliest of women, as she
"really

"really is."—"I thank you, Mr. Gosling, in the name of the ladies present."—"Thank me! for what?"—"O! only for your impartial account of Miss Eudoxia Spicer."—"Not at all," replied Mr. Gosling, "I only tell you the truth." Here the company laughed. "Her brothers are accomplished too!"—"So so!" said Mr. Gosling, "Bob Spicer manages a violoncello very well, but Billy labours at his tenor-fiddle."—"Does Mr. Gosling play on any instrument?" said Mrs. Aubrey. "I am but an indifferent musician," replied Gosling, "but I sometimes fall in with the triangle, ma'am."

A general smile, stifling a laugh, indicated to Aubrey, that Mr. Gosling began to be in danger of becoming the butt of the company, a situation in which he never could bear to see any man:

the errors of the heart he thought fairly open to raillery, but incapacity he considered as a misfortune not to be laughed at. He communicated his fear to Mrs. Aubrey by a look, who immediately changed the subject, by saying, that she had been much struck with the countenances, modesty, and propriety of demeanour of three ladies, who sat below in a seat within three of her pew. "They appear to me," said she, "to be a mother and daughters—who are they?"—"Oh," said a lady, "you mean Mrs. and the Miss Cambridges. They are good sort of people, but they do not visit much, being in very confined circumstances; they are, however, received every where, and often make morning calls. In the absence of Captain Cambridge, an officer between forty and fifty, who having served in the army in India, where he

lost

“lost an arm, has undertaken a voyage
“to recover a large property for the
“widow and children of a brother
“officer, his friend; his wife and daughters are living in a small neat box
“that he built himself, on a piece of
“land which unexpectedly descended to him, through a distant relation,
“who had purchased it on purpose to
“build upon, but had never put his
“design into execution. The young
“women are well enough, but their father has always been too poor to give
“them any accomplishments.”—“I
“think their countenances very interesting;” said Mrs. Aubrey: “I hope
“we shall see them at the parsonage.”—
“No doubt,” replied the lady, “they
“will call.”

In the rest of the talk during this morning visit, though most of the inhabitants were mentioned, there was no-

thing peculiar in them to arrest the attention of the Aubreys. The Spicers and the Cambridges seemed to be the only ones that had made an impression on their minds; and when left to themselves they remarked, what a sameness there was in the general view of well-bred persons, who to strangers and common acquaintance maintain that similarity of character, which is the result of similar education, while the genuine traits of the mind are seldom actually discovered beyond the domestic pale, or the circle of the serious transactions of life.

CHAPTER XXXII.

An accomplished Young Lady from a Boarding-School. The Wife and uneducated Daughters of an Officer of the Army.

NOVELTY and the genuine frankness of the Aubreys, failed not to make a lively and favourable impression on the minds of their first visitors, who again returned after the evening service, to enjoy the Sunday concert Mrs. Aubrey had offered them. If they were pleased in the morning with the conciliatory manners of the strangers, in the evening they were fascinated with their musical powers; and the whole of the ensuing week, Mariton and the neighbouring parishes, far and near, rung with the report of the acqui-

sition the country had gained. Every day brought company to the parsonage, till all the inhabitants had paid the welcome visit. The house was in constant motion; all was life and spirit, joy and gratulation. Never before was poor curate so visited, but then never before did poor curate take possession of his curacy under like circumstances. He came, in the first place, as sole minister of the parish; and in the next, the name and connection of Aubrey were still remembered, while the extent of his misfortune had not yet reached the country, though it was pretty generally known that he had had an immense loss. The extent of the loss was even considerably sunk in the thoughts of the family themselves, by the strength of the hope placed on the friendship of Lord Aynsford; a hope that having once received its impulse before they knew Dr. Searle, was supported

supported by its original force, without any reference to the painful association which arose from the affection he had excited in their hearts. In short, the Aubreys and the parishioners coincided in viewing the fair side of things.

At the end of the week the family were expressing their surprise that they had seen none of the Spicers, when a thundering London rap at the door proclaimed fashionable visitors, and Cæsar soon after announced Miss Spicer. Her figure was of the middle size, inclining to corpulency, to conceal which her stiff-boned stays was drawn as tight as possible about her body, making a very visible abrupt division of her person, into upper and lower protuberances of considerable magnitude, and throwing the blood up into her neck and face, where the confinement of the circulation collecting the gross particles of the habit,

threw out successive crops of pimples. Her features were not common, yet had nothing striking either as to beauty or ugliness; her light hair, obedient to the power of hot iron, curled in thick, stiff ringlets over her eyes, which were light grey on a large white orb, over which, when she winked, the lids had a considerable journey to make in their contact and retrogression; her nose was an acute angle, the longer side journeying from her front curls to the point of the short side which proceeded to the formation of her upper lip; her mouth was wide, but her teeth were good, which was a great advantage to the whole turn of her countenance; and being aware of this, she took care that they were not often concealed by their coral veils. Her nose would have made her ugly, her teeth counteracted its tendency, and to common or partial observers, the beauty

beauty of one part spread beauty through the whole. Her countenance was expressive of pain, from the pressure of the iron on her stomach, that voluntary *peine forte et dure**, which the muscles and nerves suffer in the cause of imaginary symmetry: and with the appearance of pain the emotions of real pride and affected humility held a divided empire.

In she walked, her hips rolling from side to side, her bosom handkerchief considerably preceding her ceinture, and the border of her train two yards in the rear. Instead of a curtsy, she nodded her head twice or thrice, and as if long acquainted, said; "How do do,—how do do—how do do"—her lips drawn down on each side to display her teeth. She was alone. The Au-

* A penance by the ancient law, for a prisoner who would not answer to his arraignment.

breys had risen to receive her, and Mrs. Aubrey, in her usual kind manner, expressed how glad they were to see her. When they were seated, addressing Mrs. Aubrey, — “ My mother,” said she, “ bade me give her compliments, and “ tell you she caught a severe cold last “ funday, which has confined her ever “ since, or she would have accompanied “ me to wait on you to-day.” As she delivered this common message, she gave continued short jerks of her head forward, a gesture she thought expressive of animation. In a similar style she made an apology to Aubrey for her father, on the score of business; then turning abruptly to Emily, who sat next to her, said, “ How do you like the “ country ? ” — “ I was always fond of “ the country,” replied Emily. This natural answer called forth an affected laugh from Miss Spicer, who ended it
with

with saying, "I mean this country."—"I beg your pardon," said Emily, "I like it very much."—"Better than London?"—"A great deal." This preference excited another laugh in the accomplished Miss Spicer, who was in the habit of giggling whenever she detected a mistake of any kind, or felt the superiority of her own taste when contrasted with that of others. "I love London," said she, "better than any place on earth, and the more, because I have seen so little of it yet: but I know what a charming place it is by what I have seen, and I hope I shall be able to persuade my father to live a great deal there, or at least to let mamma and me."—"Does Mrs. Spicer like town as well as you do?" said Mrs. Aubrey. Miss Spicer laughed—"She does indeed," said she, "and often stays there a long time together
" without

“without papa.”—“I hope,” said Arthur, “that Miss Spicer will not desert Mariton just as we are come to it.”—Miss Spicer laughed—“I don’t know how that may be,” replied she, “I am but just come myself; you must ask Bob when you see him; he is vastly fond of London, as every fashionable young man must be; he is very fashionable, is Bob.”—“Was that he we saw at church?” Miss Spicer laughed—“What would Bob say to such a question? he would not be taken for Billy for the world: Billy is a good-tempered fellow though; now, he hates London, and likes the country, where, on account of his broad shoulders, and thick bandy legs, he is called the Honourable Billy Spicer: but Bob! Bob is just what a man ought to be:—in the army, well made, handsome, dégagé; learned to dance
“ of

“ of Didelot, to sing of Kelly, to play
“ the violoncello of Crofdale, makes
“ verses like what’s his name, and spouts
“ like Palmer.”—“ He must be very
“ accomplished indeed,” said Aubrey,
smiling. Miss Spicer laughed—“ Yes!”
said she, “ and to distinguish him from
“ Billy every body calls him the Right
“ Honourable.”—“ Is he in the coun-
“ try? shall’t we have the pleasure of
“ seeing him?”—“ Certainly;” replied
Miss Spicer: “ he went from town to
“ Newmarket, and we expect him very
“ soon here.”—“ We shall long to see
“ this accomplished brother of yours,”
said Mrs. Aubrey, “ but in the mean time
“ will not Mr. William Spicer favour us
“ with a visit?”—“ To be sure! Oh! Billy
“ is very much of a gentleman, though
“ he is not so elegant in his person as
“ Bob.” She then began to pull the
neighbours to pieces in the usual way,

to divert her from which; "Miss Spicer," said Emily Aubrey, "we have heard of your excellence in music; I hope—"—"Is your piano in tune?" said Miss Spicer, rising and going to the instrument, then without waiting for an answer continued, "You play! don't you?"—"I am learning," replied Emily. "How long have you learned?"—"I think I may say all my life."—"Who was your master?" said Miss Spicer, striking the chords. "I have principally learned of mamma."—"Oh! only of your mamma! Will you sing? what shall I play for you?"—"Here is a volume of Handel."—"Oh! I can't bear him."—"What shall I give you then?" said Emily, naming the works of several authors. "Have you got the *Soldier tired of war's alarms*?" said Miss Spicer. *Artaxerxes* was immediately produced,
and

and Miss Spicer played the symphony of the song ; during which poor Emily, observing the performer to be inaccurate in her time, and meditating an apology for herself, was suspended between the apprehension of offending, and the reluctance to creating discord, when she was happily relieved from her dilemma, by finding that she was totally forgotten by Miss Spicer, who, at the conclusion of the symphony, began the song, and went completely through it, without once taking her eyes off the book. Her voice was good, except in her attempts to raise it to the very high notes of this screaming bravura of Arne's, and there she miserably failed, though she pressed her epiglottis as close, and opened her jaws as wide as she could. The Aubreys surprised at its going off so well, applauded her sincerely. She smiled audibly, and continuing in the feat, said, " Now Miss
" Aubrey."

“Aubrey.” Emily in vain begged to be excused, offering to accompany herself on the harp in some other air. Miss Spicer insisted on having the pleasure of accompanying her in the same song, and began without ceremony. Though she had herself reconciled the measure of the mutilated minims and crotchets, playing exactly as she sung, it was impossible for Emily to do it, as she had no guide but the time fixed by the author, consequently before she had half swelled the minim over the first syllable of the word *soldier*, the piano-forte was jiggling away the quavers of the word *tired*. Emily stopped, and again declared her inability to execute the air. Miss Spicer, understanding her literally, and conscious of her own superiority, laughed, shut the book, and said, “Never mind, my dear, we shall do better another time, don’t be disheartened, for it is a
“very

“very difficult song.” The Aubreys could not help smiling, and Arthur, who was standing behind her, shrugged up his shoulders; “Come Emily,” said he, “sing—” —“It is later than I thought,” cried Miss Spicer, rising and interrupting Arthur,—“I shall have the pleasure of hearing Miss Aubrey another time. I hope we shall see you at Spicer-Hall;”—then with the jirking familiar nod, which from the use of it by her and her brother, the Colonel, had obtained the name of the Spicer nod, said “Good day, good bye,” and out she walked, stiffly poking her chest forward, and majestically rolling in the rear, just as she walked in.

“Bravo!” cried Arthur; “hey for affectation and self-conceit! how good and compassionate she was to you, Emily! *we shall do it better another time—don't be disheartened—it is a* difficult

“ *difficult song*—I’ll tell you what; we
“ will have our revenge of her the very
“ first evening we spend in her com-
“ pany, for you shall sing *the soldier*, and
“ Arthurina shall play the accompani-
“ ment.” Mrs. Aubrey and the girls
laughed. “ She richly deserves to be
“ mortified,” said Aubrey, “ but I do
“ not like your motive, Arthur. What
“ triumph can our minds have in such a
“ revenge? it would be lost in the dis-
“ grace of the contest.” —“ I do not
“ mean, my dear sir,” said Arthur,
“ that my sister should contend with
“ Miss Spicer, but check her conceit.” —
“ I fear,” replied Aubrey, “ that in
“ doing that, Emily would only raise a
“ worse passion, of which you saw Miss
“ Spicer has the seeds in her mind by
“ the manner she had begun to talk of
“ her neighbours before your sister turn-
“ ed the subject to music. I never met
“ a young

“ a young woman who stood in more
“ need of admonition, but irritation and
“ exposure seldom effect a reform. In
“ time, when we have been longer ac-
“ quainted, I shall perhaps find proper
“ occasions to admonish without pro-
“ voking her. It is my duty; but it
“ must be done delicately, and who
“ knows but we may have the satis-
“ faction of seeing her become wise and
“ amiable ?” As he spoke, Cæsar an-
nounced Mrs. and the Miss Cambridges.

Mrs. Cambridge was a middle-aged woman, rather above the common size, well formed, and possessed of a very pleasing countenance; her daughters were tall, unfettered, handsome, and prepossessing. Sophia, the elder, had rather more animation in her features than her sister Mary Ann, whose face and mein expressed timidity. They entered the room with as much ease as if bred

bred at a court, at the same time with that propriety of demeanour which, attracting Mrs. Aubrey's notice at church, had left a favourable impression that was now confirmed by their appearance. "We come," said Mrs. Cambridge, advancing towards Mrs. Aubrey, "to pay you our visit of ceremony, and in delaying it till to-day we were influenced by the hope of finding you more disengaged than you would have been earlier in the week; these are my daughters, Miss Cambridge and Mary Ann." Mrs. Aubrey assured her she was happy to see her, and the whole party having interchanged salutations, and taken their seats, Aubrey said he hoped in the course of no long time to have the pleasure of Captain Cambridge's acquaintance. "Indeed I am afraid it *will* be long," replied she; "his friend Major Edwards left him guardian

“dian to his sons, and trustee of their
“fortunes; they are grown up young
“men. After receiving a good educa-
“tion in England they returned to
“India, and found their father dead,
“leaving the will he had made while
“we were there unaltered. Mrs. Ed-
“wards was ignorant of business, and
“my husband’s presence was considered
“as necessary, not only to the arrange-
“ment of their affairs, but to the very
“salvation of their fortune. Cam-
“bridge, who would think nothing of
“going through fire to serve a friend,
“thought as little of the water between
“this and Bengal. He grieved to leave
“us, but it was a duty; he would have
“taken us with him had it been pos-
“sible. He has been gone two years,
“and I fear another will not bring
“him back.”—“His conduct is very
“noble,” said Aubrey. “No wonder,”

replied she, "for he is in every thing a noble fellow."

The unaffected style, and evident sincerity of this eulogy, more than atoned in the minds of the Aubreys for the breach of that custom which prohibits the commendation of near relations; it exalted her. But Mrs. Cambridge was not ignorant of the custom. "Forgive me," said she, "your observation drew from me the sentiment of my heart, but do not therefore think us self-praisers."—"Nothing is easier," said Mrs. Aubrey, "than to distinguish between vain-glory and the natural amiable impulse of the soul. I should be sorry to have lost this instance of the latter."—"If he live to return," replied Mrs. Cambridge, elated by this sentiment, "you will find him fully justifying it."—"We miss him very much," added Miss Cambridge, "he has

“ has seen a great deal of the world, and
“ is so sensible and so cheerful.” This
effusion of the daughter’s was no less
pleasing than that of the wife, and its
effect was very visible in the counte-
nances of the Aubreys. “ Were you
“ abroad with your papa ?” said Arthu-
rina to Mary Ann. “ Yes,” she re-
plied, “ we were in Bengal near three
“ years when we were very young, but
“ he did not like that we should grow
“ up in India, and mamma brought us
“ home.”—“ Dear !” cried Emily, “ it
“ must have been dreadful to part !”—
“ It was indeed, Miss Aubrey,” said
Mrs. Cambridge, “ and particularly as
“ there was a misunderstanding between
“ the government and one of the most
“ powerful Nabobs of the country. It
“ soon after broke out into hostilities, in
“ the course of which Captain Cam-
“ bridge received a wound, by which he
“ lost

“lost an arm. This misfortune, however, restored him to us the sooner: we were not above eighteen months home before he rejoined us, and was put upon half-pay. We then lived in France for some time, till inheriting from one relation a small piece of land in this village, and receiving a legacy in consequence of the will of another, he determined to settle here. He built the house we live in, and laid out our little garden himself.”—“I wish he would come back,” cried Arthur-William, who was a physiognomist by nature, and perceived in the faces of the Cambridges the attaching lines of affection. “He will, my love, by and by,” said Mrs. Cambridge, putting out her hand with a smile to Arthur-William, who ran and shook hands with her. “You talk French then,” said Emily to Miss Cambridge.

Cambridge. "We have no opportunity," replied she, "to talk here; but we strive to keep it up among ourselves, to please my father, who wishes that we should not lose what we learned abroad."—"Does not Miss Spicer speak French?" said Mrs. Aubrey. "We have heard that she does," replied Miss Cambridge, "but she has not been here above six weeks, and we have met her only twice."—"They say," cried Arthur, "that she is very accomplished."—"We have heard so," said Miss Cambridge, "and particularly that she excels in music; but we are no judges, if we had even been favoured with an opportunity of judging. We have been told to expect much gratification here in that delightful attainment."—"We are all fond of music," said Mrs. Aubrey, "and cultivate it in consequence

“ quence with great perseverance. I
“ trust, however, we make it an inno-
“ cent pursuit, by not neglecting more
“ material ones for it ; for however rated
“ it may be as an accomplishment, it
“ can only be valuable as an amuse-
“ ment. As such alone we esteem it,
“ and as such it affords a pure pleasure ;
“ but as an accomplishment it certainly
“ does not deserve the place it holds in
“ society.”—“ Accomplishments,” said
Aubrey, who instantly perceived and
accorded with his wife’s design, “ which
“ depend on the acuteness of the senses,
“ rank far beneath the lowest intellec-
“ tual attainments. Moral reasonings
“ impressed upon the mind ; an ac-
“ quaintance with the appearances of
“ nature, with the history of nations and
“ distinguished persons, with the diver-
“ sions, customs, and manners of the
“ world ; a turn for poetry, a knowledge
“ of

“ of languages ; even reading and wri-
“ ting well, are surely infinitely more
“ valuable than music and dancing, which
“ are so highly appreciated. The whole
“ merit of these consists in the possession
“ of a good eye, a good ear, and supple
“ limbs ; whoever inherits such personal
“ qualities from nature, will be easily
“ made proficient accordingly : but in-
“ tellectual accomplishments require a
“ union of superior faculties with in-
“ dustry, and give a higher relish to
“ society. It is laughable to observe
“ the effects of the rage for teaching
“ music ; ear or no ear, voice or no
“ voice, every Miss must play and sing
“ to the total obstruction of all conver-
“ sation, and generally to the dire annoy-
“ ance of every ear tuned to harmony.
“ Who would not rather be able to re-
“ peat a fine poem, and to enjoy its
“ beauties, than to play the finest sonata

“that ever was composed?” Mrs. Cambridge looked at her daughters with a pleasure she thought understood alone by them, but without assenting or dissenting to Aubrey’s remarks, she said that neither she nor her daughters had any skill in the science of music, but that it was always a great gratification to them, and she thought it a desirable accomplishment.

Aubrey dwelt on the superiority of books and rational conversation, and, with the help of Mrs. Aubrey, imperceptibly drew forth the talents of the Miss Cambridges, whose conversation became extremely interesting, and far exceeded the expectation of the Aubreys. They were not only well versed in the works of Pope, Thomson, Gray, and Goldsmith, but spoke with delight and intelligence of many parts of *Paradise Lost*, a favourite of their father’s, who
took

took great pleasure in the sublime battles between the angels and the devils. They quoted some of the most beautiful passages of Shakspeare, and supported their remarks by allusions to the sentiments of celebrated authors ; but these were made without the slightest degree of pedantry, as arising from the interest of the subject and a lively recollection, and had not the slightest appearance of an affected display of a little learning. Some observations on the concluding stanzas of the celebrated Odes of Dryden and Pope, respecting the different effects attributed by them to the powers of the divine inventress of the organ, again led to the subject of music. It was agreed to confirm the general preference given to Dryden's performance, because it had been justly said, that " the passions excited by him are the pleasures and pains of real life, whereas the scene of Pope

was laid in imaginary existence ; Pope was read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with delight ; Pope hung upon the ear, and Dryden found the passes of the mind ;” but Miss Cambridge thought that there was no passage in Dryden’s to compare with the picture given to the mind by these lines :

When the full organ joins the tuneful choir
 Immortal powers incline their ear :
 Borne on the swelling notes our souls aspire,
 While solemn airs improve the sacred fire ;
 And angels lean from heav’n to hear.

“ True,” said Aubrey, “ but was not
 “ the hint taken from the other ode ?

“ She drew an angel down.”

“ It may be,” replied she, “ but does
 “ that give so divine an idea as *angels*
 “ *leaning from heaven to hear ?*”—“ I
 “ think with you, Miss Cambridge,”
 said

said Mrs. Aubrey, "that the inclining
" of a celestial host is not matched,
" and that the invention of the vocal
" frame is more honoured by it, than
" by the descent of a single angel."—
" It was an obvious thought too," observed Mrs. Cambridge; " for it
" seems naturally suggested by sacred
" songs accompanied on the organ;
" which, when well played, almost gives
" an idea beyond that of listening. The
" sounds of the instrument being vocal,
" it requires no very great stretch of
" imagination to suppose the heavenly
" choir joining in the anthem."—" The
" idea is sublime," said Aubrey, " and
" if it could be generally diffused during
" an oratorio, would heighten the glow
" produced by the grand choruses of
" Handel." Here the subject turning
upon the voice, from Dryden's describing the organ as a vocal frame, Aubrey
I. 6 declared

declared a decided preference to the human voice above all instruments, and asked Mrs. Cambridge if the Miss Cambridges sung. She said that they had never learned any kind of music, but that they had a good ear, and their voices had been sometimes much praised. She did not pretend to be a judge, but to her they seemed very sweet. This produced a request which was accorded without hesitation, and the Aubreys were charmed to hear the sisters sing together, not only in very melodious tones, but with just harmony. In return, Emily and Arthurina sung to the piano-forte, accompanied by Arthur's violoncello; after which Mrs. Cambridge, however delighted, recollected that she had far exceeded the limits of a first call of ceremony; and, having expressed her pleasure, and stayed till her daughters had given way to their rapture,
rose

rose to go, begging Mrs. Aubrey to lay the blame of her long visit on those who had been the cause of her forgetting time. Emily and Arthurina shook hands in a friendly manner with the sisters, and the whole family, thoughtless of ceremony, accompanied the Cambridges to the door, where they parted with smiles, and mutual assurances of a desire to cultivate a friendship. The Aubreys returned to the sitting-room, overflowing with the praises of these *well-enough, unaccomplished* young women, and their amiable mother.

CHAPTER XXXIIL

Resolutions depending on the Will of others seldom easily executed. Visits from more of the Spicer Family. Emphatic Looks and Cecisbeos. A Party to Warwick A Conversazione and Concert at Spicer-Hall. The Danger of Envy and Stiff Stays together.

THE visits received by the Aubreys were all returned, and in the usual progress of time the family were established on an agreeable and easy footing with the inhabitants of Mariton and the neighbouring places. They never once thought of the Dirks, the Vultures, or the Grinaways, who had seats at different and distant parts of the country, but, according to their usual characters, enjoyed

joyed time as it passed, innocently, and doing all the good in their power. Aubrey, adhering to the resolutions he had formed, not only visited the rich, but every class of his parishioners, on the principle of duty. Among the former, however, he soon found the pales of independence, and the barriers of habit opposed to all his designs of admonition. His religion was repelled to the desk and the pulpit; there he was attended to and admired; but at table, and in company, he found that he must be Mr. Aubrey, or the parson; courted for festive qualities, or quizzed for sanctity. Among the lower orders he found a spirit of metaphysical and political enquiry, combined with a warped imagination and a defective logic, the offsprings of debating clubs established at Loughborough and other towns; that no less fenced off in private the moral
and

and religious interference of the minister, and penned up his ministry within the walls of his church, which on various motives was constantly attended by most of the inhabitants. Aubrey, however, determined not to be discouraged, for as Rome was not built in a day, neither was Mariton to be made another Mel-ford without time, and the influence of such a ministry as that of the Greys.

Meanwhile, in the social civilities of their neighbours, the family found sufficient resources of variety when they left their studies, and were disposed for company. By some they were attracted more than by others, according to the approximating degrees of the mental affinities. With none were they inclined to unite more completely than with the Cambridges; yet though, when they met, the attraction seemed mutual; the steady adherence of Mrs. Cambridge to the
rules

rules she had laid down on parting with her husband, was an obstruction to frequent visits. The Aubreys loved the Cambridges more, and saw them less, than any other of their neighbours. Nor were the Spicers at first very ardent visitors. When Emily and Arthurina returned Miss Spicer's visit she was not at home, and it was full a fortnight after before either her father or mother appeared at the parsonage.

On the arrival, however, of Col. Bob Spicer, who, on hearing of the beauty and accomplishments of Emily Aubrey from some of the inhabitants, wished to form an intimacy between the families, Mr. and Mrs. Spicer had separately on the same morning called. Mr. Spicer was neither tall nor short, but square built, and inclined to corpulency. His countenance, in spite of an habitual, hypocritical

pocritical smile, was expressive of a turbulent spirit, and a designing soul; his eyes rolled from side to side when he spoke, as if the motion of them were necessary to secure his ideas, and assist in giving them birth, and his under lip, of a disproportioned magnitude, hung cushioned on his chin. Though ignorant of almost every thing but the business by which he made his fortune, he had a great ambition to be considered as a man of very superior intellect, which led him to a conceit that he possessed eloquence enough to gain the admiration of country people, though his attempts never failed to expose his ignorance, and render him ridiculous. He was of too much importance to make a long visit; he conversed on wool and cloths with Mrs. Aubrey, on tolls and highways with Aubrey, took no notice of
any

any other person in the family, and left them in a hurry to attend a vestry on business relative to parish rates.

Mrs. Spicer was of a very dissimilar character, except in the conceit of superior parts; but then the objects of it were of a different nature from those of her husband's: fine writing, poetry, correct pronunciation, emphatic words, accompanied by emphatic looks, French and Italian, and an independent taste for drawing and music, though she neither drew nor played, were the accomplishments on which she prided herself. This pride was still exceeded by personal vanity. Her person vied with that of her daughter in tightness and abrupt protuberances, but on a much larger scale. The features of her face were ill assorted: she had a small nose between large cheeks, and thin lips with a wide mouth, which never opened over
less

less than the whole of the upper gums; but the natural effect of these deformities was considerably counteracted by her eyes, which were good both in shape and colour, and, like her daughter's teeth, were to common observers a sufficient passport for the lady's pretensions. What however most distinguished Mrs. Spicer in her own opinion from the vulgar herd, were the acuteness of her feelings, and the delicacy of her sentiments, and she had always consequently her mental attachments; one particular person in her confidence on all topics of the soul, with whom alone she conversed by emphatic looks in company, and in private by the uninterrupted flow of congenial thought in expressive language. Of these attachments Mrs. Spicer had had many, but never more than one at a time, except once, and finding it incompatible, she gave up one
of.

of them. The usual changes of these particular friends were produced by some capricious interference of her husband, some unexpected detection of a dissimilarity of sentiment, or some offer of a more agreeable cecisbeo, for the honour of which office there had been more than one contest; but whether these arose from admiration of the lady, or of the valuable presents she was known to make to her bosom companions, was never clearly decided. Mr. Gosling was her present *commercer*. She brought him with her from London the year before, while Miss Spicer was at school, and with whom he managed also to keep upon good terms; his praises being liberally bestowed upon her, with Mrs. Spicer's consent, who, far from being jealous of her daughter's perfections, was proud of them, as being chiefly derived from herself. Gosling was a simple, good-

good-tempered fellow, resolved not to make enemies, and generally successful in making friends, by combining with inferior abilities the habit of praising with some skill. He was laughed at and liked. When Mrs. Spicer paid her first visit at the parsonage he attended her, and astonished the Aubreys by the perseverance with which he returned her emphatic looks, during the short conversation that took place, in which she displayed the stores of her mind. Having had all, or most of the talk to herself, she went away highly pleased with the Aubreys, who the very next morning received cards of invitation to a *conversazione* that day week, to be followed by a concert.

Scarcely was the answer accepting the invitation written, when an agreeable voice singing was heard in the hall, and immediately after Col. Spicer was announced.

nounced. He did not give over singing till he was quite in the room. . He was a little well-made man, and his countenance would have been a pleasing one, had it not been for a certain archness he invariably sported in his left eye, the corner of which was for ever on a half wink, while a seemingly significant smile persevered in possession of the correspondent ^{Mrs} corner of his mouth, and for the beard left on each side of his face, descending in whiskers, and diminishing as they descended, from an inch in breadth to a point almost reaching his chin. He was dressed in a plain green frock, cut off behind in the utmost extravagance of the fashion, while a stiff cape almost towered above his powdered head. Over three distinct underwaistcoats he wore one of buff casimere, the bottom of which met the top of his buckskin breeches across his chest. His
buckskins

buckskins buttoned over the calves of his legs, the rest of which was covered with a flesh-coloured silk stocking, and a slipper tied with a string for a shoe; a round hat and whip in his hand, and a quizzing glass suspended to his neck by a black ribbon, and bobbing about on his leather waistband, completed the person of the Right Honourable Bob Spicer. He saluted the Aubreys with the Spicer nod, and addressed them with all the familiarity of old acquaintance, ogling Emily and her mother by turns, and not knowing on which to bestow the greater share of what admiration he had to spare from himself. He talked of their dress, of their roscate health, of the report he had received of their voices, and sung them an airy French song. "*Vive la bagatelle!*" cried he in concluding it, then added, addressing Emily—"La divine Emilie parle François—
n'est

n'est ce pas?" Emily smiled, and with a bow declined entering into conversation in French. He then asked her to join in a duet with him, and mentioned several French ones; but all singing was avoided by the Aubreys, who, though his voice was sweet, were determined not to feed his vanity. Not to offend him, however, Mrs. Aubrey promised to join in a duet with him at Mrs. Spicer's concert. He thanked her with a leer, and turning suddenly to Arthur, said, "There will be a good show of
" pretty faces on Thursday at Warwick,
" I have just had a letter that tells me
" great preparations are making for the
" county ball—will you go?—come,
" what say you?—I am going—we will
" come back the very next day if you
" like it." Though Arthur wished to see Warwick, and liked the proposal

much, yet he did not think that Aubrey would approve his going as the companion of the proposer. "I thank you, Colonel," said he, "but I am too much engaged this week to accept the pleasure you offer." Colonel Spicer then applied to Aubrey, and said that Mr. Rowley was going, and that they should be very glad of Arthur's company. The mention of an amiable young man, living near Mariton, of whom Aubrey had a good opinion, removed the objection he felt to his son's going, and determining beforehand to speak to Mr. Rowley, he told Arthur that he had better take the opportunity of seeing Warwick and the company. This removing the only objection Arthur had, it was resolved that he should accompany Mr. Rowley and Col. Spicer to Warwick; and
the

the latter, after strutting several times about the room in a familiar way, took his leave.

"Is this," exclaimed Emily, as soon as he was gone, "is this the Right Honourable all-accomplished Bob Spicer!"—"There is great frivolity in his appearance," said Aubrey, "but he is young; let us hope he may improve."—"To be sure," observed Mrs. Aubrey, "there is no length to which hope may not carry us."—"He smelt very sweet," said Arthur-William. This created a laugh, and Arthurina taking the little fellow by the hand, ran with him into the garden, whither they were followed by the rest of the family. The next day, which was Tuesday, Aubrey saw Mr. Rowley, and begged his attention to Arthur in their jaunt to Warwick. As it was a town famous in ancient story, he wished

that the party should not merely go to the ball and back the day after, and therefore proposed that they should go over on Wednesday and stay till Saturday. This was agreed to, and Arthur, on quitting Mariton, for the first time of his life, found himself from under the immediate guidance of his father. The whole family saw him depart with pleasure, because they knew it was to give him pleasure, and his sisters would have been glad to go to the ball with him, though they were aware, that neither of them was yet old enough to appear at a public assembly. In the absence of their brother, the girls took a delight in strolling daily on the Warwick road, and talking of him ; and on Saturday afternoon, they went on in hopes of meeting him so far, that returning they were benighted, and walked full half an hour in the dark before they reached home. It was fortunate

fortunate for the family, that Mr. Rowley was with Arthur, as it saved them much pain, when it appeared, that the party prolonged their stay. Sunday passed, and Monday, the day fixed for Mrs. Spicer's concert, yet none of them appeared; but Aubrey fully depended on Mr. Rowley, and was not uneasy.

In the evening he attended Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, who were dressed with great taste, to Spicer-Hall. After ascending a handsome staircase, they went forward into an antichamber, where a footman was stationed to announce the names of the company. He opened the door to the right, and ushered Aubrey and the ladies into the drawing-room with the usual ceremonies. Mrs. Spicer, seated at the top of the room with two of her most intimate friends from Loughborough, on a large elegant sofa, waited till the Aubreys

K 3

came

came up close to her before she rose, which at last she did, in what she thought a graceful zigzag, making two sides of an angle up, and, without stopping, the same two sides of an angle down, begging at the same time with a gracious smile, that they would take their seats. They accordingly bowed and filed off. As they were not late, their chairs were not very far from the sofa. By degrees the room filled, and the Aubreys sat in constant expectation of the commencement of the promised conversation. For half an hour, nothing passed but an interchange of salutation, and then tea was handed round: the gentlemen stood together in the middle of the floor discussing markets, parish affairs, and country banks; the ladies sat, some in silent observation, some talking with those next to them. The master of the house was not present; Aubrey found afterwards, that

that he never would attend his wife's coteries, which were always the source of ill-humour, contention, and violence between them: the Colonel was at Warwick; and the honourable Billy Spicer, with Mr. Gosling for an aid-de-camp, was the only master of the ceremonies. Billy lived with his father to be his secretary and keep his books, and, as he had great hopes in his consideration, he generally, when there was any variance between his father and mother, sided with the former, in his presence; but otherwise, he was always subservient to the latter, who accordingly made every allowance for the prudence of her son. While Mr. Gosling's attentions were paid to the sofa, Billy Spicer, though certainly his legs were less formed than Gosling's for parading a drawing-room, walked round the circle of ladies to ask if the tea were properly served.

In this manner was the *conversazione* conducted for an hour and a half while the company sipped tea, till at length a general laugh among the gentlemen, roused a general curiosity among the ladies, and Mrs. Spicer raising her voice, called out, "Do, let us have that: we
" must have that"—on which, silence ensuing, one of the gentlemen addressing Mrs. Spicer, said: "Madam, we were
" talking of the evil arising from country
" banks, and I believe the subject was fully
" exhausted, when I told the following
" anecdote which occurred the other day
" at Leicester. Old Pockett, the banker,
" has long been in the practice of taking
" sixpence in the pound for paying money for drafts, if the payment were
" demanded in cash, or notes of the bank
" of England; but no deduction was expected, if his own notes were taken.
" A poor man from a distant part of the
" country,

“ country, who had received a draft on
“ Pockett, not liking country notes, re-
“ quested to be paid in cash, or Bank of
“ England paper. He was told the cus-
“ tom, against which he protested, plead-
“ ing his circumstances, and urging, that
“ where he lived, he might find a
“ difficulty in passing private notes. It
“ was in vain for him to reason, or ap-
“ peal to old Pockett’s feelings—Pockett
“ had never known any thing gained by
“ reason or feelings, but he was very
“ sensible of the value of a good custom,
“ and he assured the poor man, that it
“ was impossible for him to break
“ through it. On this, the man was
“ angry, but standing a few minutes to
“ consider, he bethought himself, and
“ said—“ Well, if I must, I must; I
“ can’t afford any deduction, so let me
“ have your own notes.”—The full
“ amount of the draft was immediately
“ paid

“ paid to him in Pockett’s notes, and
“ he was made to write a receipt on the
“ back of it. Instead of withdrawing,
“ he stood some time smiling, and look-
“ ing alternately at the paper, and at the
“ old banker, who at length asked him,
“ why he did not go.”—“ Why, look
“ ye, Master Pockett,” said the man,
“ these are all your notes, true enough—
“ I have examined every one of them—
“ you won’t deny it, I am sure, for you
“ are an honest man, Master Pockett—
“ there they are, I present them for pay-
“ ment, refuse me the cash for them, if
“ you dare.” The company laughed
heartily at the miser’s dilemma, and re-
joiced that he was outwitted. After
which, Mr. Gosling caught the interval
of silence that succeeded to inform them,
that he had been soliciting Mrs. Spicer to
favour them with reading some favour-
ite piece, and hoped, that he should be
generally

generally seconded. "Oh! pray, Mrs. Spicer—Oh! pray, Mrs. Spicer," was heard from every quarter.

As her *conversaziones* included readings, the lady was not difficult on the occasion; she bowed affectedly, and saying, "since you will have it so," took from under one of the bolsters of the sofa, a thin book, elegantly bound in red morocco, and opening it at the place marked, said she would read the much admired poem of John Gilpin, which she prefaced with some remarks on the different manner in which she had heard it read in town. She then began, and went through the unfortunate ballad, according to her own ideas of propriety, sometimes slow and pompously, sometimes galloping with Johnny, misplacing stops, accents, and emphases, and at every verse, exchanging emphatic looks with Gosling. At first, the Aubreys felt

for her; but as she proceeded, she became so truly ridiculous, that they could not help enjoying the farce. Her own consciousness, however,—so uncertain a thing is consciousness!—far from whispering that some of her hearers, either pitied or laughed at her, fully confirmed the admiring interjections of the dear Gosling, and the extorted applause of civility. She gave time for the company to interchange their remarks, and then requested some lady or gentleman to oblige her with the perusal of a favourite *morceau*. This being universally declined, she regretted, that Italian was not generally understood, as she should have had great pleasure in reading to the company, one of the sweetest pieces ever composed. Mr. Gosling assured her, that the company regretted the loss, and the conversation then turned, among those who understood any thing of it,
upon

upon the sweetness of the Italian pronunciation, and those who did not understand it, were informed, that every word ended with a vowel. "Then," said Mrs. Spicer, "the certainty of the pronunciation, so much superior in that respect to our tongue. By the way, Mr. Aubrey, I wonder to find you in the pulpit pronouncing the word knowledge, *nollege*. Why do you not adopt the clerical mode of speaking it?"—One reason, Madam," replied Aubrey, "is, because it is clerical. I know no right that the clergy have to depart from the established rules of pronunciation. It is an innovation of a few years standing, arising from an affected nicety of correction, and I am sorry that it is more general among the clergy than among any other body of men; for, not only the genius of the English language requires it to be simplified in
" its

“ its sound like other words of the same
“ nature, but the clerical mode of pro-
“ nouncing it is pedantic and coarse on
“ the ear ; nothing but the aptitude of
“ running into imitation, could have led
“ such numbers to follow an example in
“ a sound so unmelodious. Accord-
“ ingly, you find it adopted, only where
“ a show of learning is aimed at ; but,
“ among the higher classes of extempore
“ speakers, and among the lower classes
“ of society who are led by their ear, the
“ word takes its natural sound.”—“ Nae,
“ Maister Aubrey,” said a Scotch gen-
tleman, “ I canna agree wi ye, for we
“ awwaife caw it *knowledge* i’ the North ;
“ and in gude troth, it daes na soond sae
“ very unmusical to my ear.”—“ I did
“ not say, it was not Scotch,” replied
Aubrey, “ but that it is not English ;
“ and habit, whose influence is univer-
“ sal, may render harsh sounds pleasing.”
—“ But,

—“ But, Sir, hoo is’t you can mak out
 “ to change *know* into *nol* ? ” — “ As we
 “ make out,” said Aubrey, “ to change
 “ *fore* into *for*, *bo* into *bol*, and many
 “ more. The Scotch say, *forehead*,
 “ and *boliday*, as well as *knowledge* ;
 “ but, as the clergy do not seem to have
 “ any inclination to adopt these sounds
 “ from the North, I hope they will gra-
 “ dually desist from that which they have
 “ adopted.” — “ You will allow,” said
 Mrs. Spicer, “ that it is grander to the
 “ ear.” — “ No, indeed, Madam,” re-
 plied he, “ I cannot ; unless it be that
 “ kind of grandeur which is out of na-
 “ ture.” Here Mrs. Spicer exchanged
 emphatic looks with the dear Gosling. —
 “ Your calling this error clerical,” pro-
 ceeded Aubrey, “ brings to my mind,
 “ that I not long since heard a man, and
 “ he was a teacher of languages too, talk
 “ of the *London pronunciation*, and *Oxford*
 “ *pro-*

“*pronunciation* as contradistinguished,
“ and he instanced it in the word *nasal*.
“ Oxford,” said he, “ has it *nasal*, with
“ the hissing sound of *f*, whereas, Lon-
“ don says *naxal*.” He was angry that
“ I doubted of the error being general at
“ Oxford, and from stating the fact, he
“ patronized the fault, on which I con-
“ tented myself with assuring him, that
“ the Cantabs were better orthoepists.”—
“ Hoot,” said the Scotch gentleman,
“ orthoepy is the very lowest of aw the
“ sciences, and beneath the attention of
“ men of learning aw together: it’s a
“ mere buznis of soons, a mere maiter
“ of moonshine. What signifies what
“ a shell is, guin the kairnal be good.”—
“ Indeed,” replied Aubrey, “ I am no
“ such verbal stickler as to break squares
“ with any man for his pronunciation;
“ but, I certainly do not think it un-
“ worthy the attention of the most learn-
“ ed;

“ ed; and you cannot but know, Sir,
“ that at all times the most learned have
“ been solicitous to pronounce well, and
“ to establish a standard for their lan-
“ guage. The prosody of the Greeks
“ and Romans, was invariably fixed on
“ rules which have descended to us, and
“ are in the hands of every school-boy;
“ and though we are ignorant of their
“ accent, we cannot doubt that it was
“ regular and uniform. The Italians
“ and French have shown their attention
“ to the stability of their pronunciation,
“ and no polite nation feels itself above
“ this care but the English: our words
“ are constantly changing both their
“ sound and sense. As for the word
“ *knowledge*, I really believe it will reco-
“ ver itself, in spite of the Episcopal au-
“ thorities, which at present maintain it
“ in the pulpit; but I fear the word
“ *oblige*,

“*oblige**, will not be so easily retrieved.
 “ There is no such sound in the English
 “ language as *eige* with the long *i*, and
 “ the sound of *obleige*†, is very grating
 “ to the ear. It is one of the compa-
 “ mions in a class of words, where nature
 “ has directed our tongue to the preser-
 “ vation of the original accent, the ear
 “ being repugnant to a change, and till
 “ lately, it was always pronounced *obleege*,
 “ by polite speakers—

Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers *befieg'd*,
 And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd.

“ Nor would Pope, licentious as he was
 “ in rhyming, ever have thought of
 “ rhyming *eige*, with *ege*.”—“ But,”

• Obleege.

† *ei*, that is, *i* long—*ai* will not express *i* long,
 without explanation, on account of the variety of
 the sounds of *a*.

said

said Mr. Gosling, "what do you say to
" Lord Chesterfield, Mr. Aubrey? Was
" not he a polite speaker?"—"Certainly," replied Aubrey, "and I have
" not a doubt, that he always pronounced
" the word *obleege*."—"What will
" you lay of that?" retorting Gosling:
" Who is to decide the bet?" said Aubrey,
" he that is competent to decide
" the bet, can decide the question without
" the bet."—"My Lord himself,"
replied Gosling,—“I see, Sir,” said Aubrey,
" that you have embraced the mistake
" that has arisen on the form adopted
" by Lord Chesterfield, in his Advice to
" his Son, to avoid the vulgar manner
" of pronouncing this word amongst
" others; a mistake, which is the more
" likely to prove fatal, as it has been
" adopted and confirmed by one of our
" latest and best orthoepists, a man of
" talents, erudition, and indefatigable
" industry,

“ industry, to whose labours the public
 “ are greatly indebted *. But, in spite
 “ of the enthusiasm produced by autho-
 “ rity, I am not for erring with Plato:
 “ in my opinion, Lord Chesterfield, in
 “ the letter alluded to, meant to stamp
 “ vulgarity on the pronunciation of the
 “ *i* long.” ‘ Even his pronunciation of
 ‘ proper words,’ says his Lordship,
 speaking of a man deficient in good-
 breeding, ‘ carries the mark of the beast
 ‘ along with it. He calls the earth,
 ‘ *yearth*; he is *obleiged*, not *obliged* to
 ‘ you.’ “ The letters *ei* appear to me
 “ to mark the vulgar long *i*; for *no other*
 “ *diphthong* so unequivocally expresses
 “ it. Lord Chesterfield was not writing
 “ with the precision of later orthoepists,
 “ and naturally took a diphthong which
 “ was susceptible of the sound, as in

* Mr. Walker, author of a Critical Pronoun-
 cing Dictionary.

“ *height*,

“ *height*, though its general sound be *a*,
“ as in *vein*. Had he meant the reverse,
“ would he have passed over *ee*, and *ie*,
“ to pitch upon *ei*? impossible. But a
“ still stronger argument is, that though
“ the letters to his son were written at least
“ twenty years before they were pub-
“ lished, the alteration of the word did
“ not begin to take place, till a consi-
“ derable time after his Lordship’s
“ death: so that his Lordship’s exam-
“ ple, if he gave such an example, had no
“ influence on polite language, though
“ he was universally esteemed one of
“ the most refined and most eloquent
“ speakers of the age: and notwith-
“ standing the concurrent authority of
“ the best poet of that period, the alter-
“ ation of the proper and original pro-
“ nunciation of the word has been lately
“ begun, on a supposed discovery, that
“ to mark the sound of long *e*, such a
“ man

“man as Lord Chesterfield would use
 “the diphthong *ei*, rather than *ee*, or *ie*.
 “As the best speakers in parliament,
 “and the majority of accomplished per-
 “sons in the first circles still persevere in
 “the original sound, the word has perhaps
 “some chance yet, notwithstanding the
 “pronunciation against which Lord Ches-
 “terfield I am confident intended to pro-
 “test, has been so widely diffused, and
 “though it is even fostered on the stage.”
 —“There is muckle sense in what you
 “noo say, Maister Aubrey,” said the
 Scotch gentleman; “for aw the world
 “maun say *obleege*, unless they go entire
 “beside ilka rule of polite pronunciation
 “—to be sure, aw the world maun say
 “*obleege*.”

This national support drew a smile
 from Aubrey, and created a general
 laugh, in the middle of which Colonel
 Spicer in his riding cloaths, made his ap-
 pearance at the bottom of the room.

On

On entering, he raised his glass to his eye to see less distinctly through it the objects he had seen perfectly well without it—it was therefore no sooner raised than dropped, and he darted forward to the Aubreys. The Colonel assured Aubrey of Arthur being well, and, with Rowley, in good hands, while with his arch eye, he bestowed painful admiration on Emily. “He gave me a letter for you, which I find I left in another coat pocket; but I have told my man to open my portmanteau, and bring it immediately.” He made earnest apologies for his dress, and the lateness of his appearance, declaring, that the latter was the cause of the former, as he was too impatient to join the party to lose a moment in making his toilette. After accounting for leaving Warwick too late to be sooner at Mariton, he said, he must quit them for a moment, to go and make his

his apologies to his Lady-Mother and the company ; then giving them the Spicer nod, and mechanically using his glass, he walked away to the sofa. While he was going through the ceremonies that drew him from the Aubreys, a servant brought in Arthur's letter, which Aubrey put into his pocket, to be read at home, being doubly satisfied in Mr. Rowley's stay with his son, and in the Colonel's leaving him. The servant went forward and delivered a message to Mrs. Spicer, who ordered him to throw the doors open ; and rising soon after, led the way to the concert-room, which was on the opposite side of the anti-chamber.

Several professional performers were tuning their instruments to the piano, at which sat Mr. Moreton the organist of Mariton ; for, however partial the Colonel was to his sister Eudoxia in other respects,

spects, he always preferred having the piano under the direction of Mr. Moreton in the crashes at Spicer-Hall. The Colonel had a just ear, and some taste in music, and for a gentleman he played well on the violoncello. The company being seated, a concerto of Haydn's was performed, in the execution of which there was nothing so remarkable as the audible counting of time, the perpetually recurring *one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four*, of the Honourable Billy Spicer, who leaned over his stand to keep his eyes steadily on his book, and worked at his tenor so laboriously that big drops bubbled on his temples, and small streams washed the powder from his hair down his cheeks. After the concerto, Col. Spicer put Mrs. Aubrey in mind of her promise to sing a duet with him, which she did without hesitation, to the delight of the whole

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company, Miss Spicer excepted, from whose bosom envy now banished every degree of pleasure, and who, like a school-miss, strove to conceal her pain by abrupt giggling. When called upon by Mrs. Aubrey to favour the company with a song, she attempted to excuse herself, even resisting one of Mrs. Spicer's emphatic looks, till Col. Spicer entreated she would sing "Angels ever bright and fair," protesting that she sung it better than—Here the Colonel's voice failed, or dropped so low, that the comparison was lost; but she heard enough to draw her forth, and she took Mr. Moreton's seat at the piano, requesting her brother at the same time, not to let any of the other instruments join. Accordingly, having the management of the accompaniment entirely to herself, she went through the song with confidence and success. She received great applause,

applause, and particularly from Emily Aubrey, on whom she found herself obliged to call, in consequence of a hint from her brother. Finding it unavoidable, she determined to mortify her, by compelling her to sing the song which she remembered that Emily attempted in vain the first day she saw her. She had no doubt, that her vanity would again induce her to try it, and she was equally confident, that she would disgrace herself. She requested to hear, "The Soldier tired of War's Alarms." Emily, recollecting her father's observation to Arthur, excused herself, till Aubrey perceiving the vile motive of the request, pressed her arm, saying, "Try, Emily, try to oblige Miss Spicer;" on which she consented, and the delighted Eudoxia returned to her seat, anticipating her triumph over the daughter at least.

Emily's voice had been gradually

gaining strength for some years, and had now attained a roundness, flexibility, and compass, equal to her mother's. Regular practice had so familiarized her ear to harmony, that it was indifferent to her, whether she accompanied herself or were accompanied, whether the accompaniment were executed on a single instrument, or supported by a band, and knowing Mr. Moreton's taste, she paid him the compliment of begging him to take the piano. "Shall we all take our parts?" said Col. Spicer to Emily. The beautiful blue eyes of Emily turned to her father, to know how far he was inclined to punish Miss Spicer, and half asked his mercy; but he now thought punishment mercy, and he answered, "By all means Colonel, the chief beauty of this song arises from the accompaniments." Better and better, thought Miss Spicer, who, during

during the whole symphony, sat swelling with expectation. The lovely Emily standing by the piano, and facing the company, fell in with the instruments when they came to the song, with a just taste and perfect harmony, and, the performers keeping under her voice, she gave the first part in the finest style. Attention and admiration pursued every note. Emily's form, and the emanation of soul from her countenance, heightened the pleasure she spread through the room, and Mrs. Spicer herself concluded one of her emphatic looks at Gosling with an equally emphatic *bab!* at the end of the strain. Meanwhile, poor Eudoxia was suffering the agonies of that passion, which may be truly called diabolical, as it was the origin of the devil: envy had blown up its fire in her heart, and the unexpected disappointment she experienced, setting her blood in violent

L 3

motion,

motion, the circulation of it was suddenly stopped by the confinement of the whale-bone ligature about her stomach ; and she screamed, and fell into fits, just as Emily had begun the second strain. The lovely songster immediately ceased singing, the company all rose, and a scene of confusion followed. Mrs. Spicer hurried to her darling child ; salts, hartshorn, and cold water were resorted to without effect. It was found necessary to loosen her bandages, and the gentlemen were requested to withdraw. The dangerous whale-bone being removed, a free circulation of the blood again took place, and Miss Spicer gradually recovered. Mrs. Aubrey, being near her, though she was not at a loss to guess the real cause of the sudden fit, inveighed against the injurious fashion of squeezing any part of the body, by means of unyielding cases, into a smaller compass

pass than was ever intended by nature. Miss Spicer, glad of the opportunity of saddling fashion with the effects of envy, assented to Mrs. Aubrey's remarks, saying, she wondered that she ever wore such stays, as she did not need them. Her real malady, however, returning with her recollection, she declared she was too ill to bear the music any more. This declaration, with the emphatic anxiety shown by Mrs. Spicer, put an end to the concert, and the company soon after retired, to the great mortification of the Colonel, whose admiration of Emily had risen to ecstasy, and to the dismay of the Honourable Billy Spicer, who was never so conscious of shining as when he was counting his bars ; one, two, three, four.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A little Family Chat on the Absurdity of private set Meetings to display Talents. A Hint on the Object of reading to others, and the Danger of Emulation. Arthur's Excursion. Col. Spicer in Love. An extraordinary Visitor at the Parsonage.

As it was not late when Mrs. Spicer's party broke up, the Aubreys got home before their usual hour of retiring to rest, and they spent the remainder of the evening in a conversation naturally resulting from the *conversazione* and concert at Spicer-Hall. "I had a very different idea of a *conversazione*," said Emily, "to that raised by Mrs. Spicer's; I thought that some agreeable subject
" was

“ was to be started, to which the atten-
“ tion of every one of the company was
“ to be given, and that all might ex-
“ press their sentiments, without formal-
“ ly entering into deep and serious argu-
“ ments.”—“ Emily,” said Mrs. Au-
brey, “ thought it was only a rational
“ conversation.”—“ It was no bad idea,”
said Aubrey, “ for if people in general
“ meet to talk only on the most frivo-
“ lous, reiterated, exhausted topics, and
“ to play at cards, the meeting of a par-
“ ty for the purpose of rational conver-
“ sation, would deserve the name. But
“ the truth is, that affectation spoils every
“ thing ; both the term and the meet-
“ ing are affected : they arrogate open-
“ ly a superiority of intellectual enter-
“ tainment, which they seldom justify,
“ and which is a thousand times more
“ gratifying, when it appears to be the
“ unpremeditated result of a meeting of
“ sensible

“ sensible friends. One friend may de-
“ fire another to come and converse on
“ elevated subjects : or a man in making
“ a party, may in his invitation, an-
“ ticipate the pleasure he proposes for
“ his friends by observing, that such and
“ such well-informed persons, wits, and
“ convivial companions will be present ;
“ but general invitations to a formal
“ display of each individual’s portion of
“ knowledge and eloquence are absurd,
“ and generally disappoint those who at-
“ tend.” — “ At the *conversazioni* I have
“ been at,” said Mrs. Aubrey, “ I have
“ observed nothing very different from
“ Mrs. Spicer’s, except poor John Gil-
“ pin ; for, knots of men plant themselves
“ at several corners of the rooms, and
“ talk over the usual politics ; some learn-
“ ed man gets an audience of several of
“ his particular acquaintance, while the
“ mass of the company resort to the
“ common.

“common occurrences of the day,
“to the events of a ride, to dress,
“and public places, topics very well
“for chat, but rendered ridiculous by
“a solemn title.”—“That is the mis-
“fortune of it,” said Aubrey; “things
“become ridiculous by the mode of
“treating them. Can any thing, for
“instance, be more agreeable than a
“party of friends where one reads to the
“others, and observations are made on
“the topics that arise from the subjects
“read? But let in vanity; see one take
“up a book, not to amuse, not to in-
“struct; but to excite admiration, and
“solely to shew fine reading; pleasure
“flies: instead of enjoying the author,
“we wonder at the reader, either for
“his skill or his assurance; but the ob-
“ject of reading is lost.”—“But to
“please in reading,” said Emily, “it is
“necessary to read well.”—“Certain-

“ly,” replied Aubrey, “but it should
“form no part of the reader’s view;
“and the idea of it ought to be kept
“from the mind of the hearers, whose
“admiration must be preceded by de-
“light, or it will be accompanied with
“disgust.”—“I felt very much for poor
“Mrs. Spicer,” said Arthurina.—“So
“did I,” said Mrs. Aubrey, “till she
“was so ludicrously delighted with her-
“self.”—“The selfish passions,” said
“Aubrey, “are naturally destructive
“of the pleasures of society. Where
“people meet to emulate, and to observe
“others for the purpose of feeling su-
“periority, rather than for that of
“exchanging gratification, envy takes
“the place of the social spring, and
“demons only can enjoy the scene.”—
“Poor Eudoxia!” cried Arthurina;
“what a pop her stays gave, when Mrs.
“Spicer cut the lace!”—“Envy,”
said

said Aubrey, " is the most odious of the
" passions ; so odious that, in my mind,
" not even the affection of a father can
" overlook it. I am sure, girls, dear as
" you are to me, that I could love
" neither of you, if I discovered it in
" your hearts."—" It is so unnatural,"
said Emily, who judged from her own
nature :—" the nearer any one is per-
" fect, the more we should delight in
" them, I think. What is a proficien-
" cy in music, compared to the excel-
" lence of the understanding and of the
" heart? Can there be any thing more
" amiable than the Cambridges? Who
" could envy them? Does not the
" thought of them make you happy,
" Arthurina?"—" I think them very
" handsome, and very clever," replied
Arthurina ; " and I like them very
" much. And as for Miss Spicer, I
" really feel unhappy that she should
" make herself such a fool."—" God
" bless

“bless you! my girls!” exclaimed Aubrey, “you make my heart glow, in bringing to my mind the maxim of an amiable philosopher*, who says: ‘Let the unhappiness you feel at another’s errors, and the happiness you enjoy in their perfections, be the measure of your progress in wisdom and virtue.’ This was unsophisticated praise; and the glow that Aubrey felt, diffused itself through the bosoms of his beloved girls, and charmed the heart of their mother.

After this conversation, Aubrey opened Arthur’s letter, which had not been forgotten, but having heard that he was well, and expecting nothing more than a few lines to prevent uneasiness, he did not think it necessary to interrupt the conversation by reading it sooner. It was as follows:

* Lavater.

“My

“ My dear Sir,

“ Though I am extremely pleased
“ with Warwick, the country around it,
“ and particularly with the company I
“ have met, I should not yield to Mr.
“ Rowley’s request of suffering Col. Spi-
“ cer to return without me, if I thought
“ it would cause any uneasiness at the
“ Parsonage ; but I am persuaded, you
“ will have no objection to my consent-
“ ing to a plan proposed by Mr. Row-
“ ley, of spending a day or two at Strat-
“ ford. We shall return here, where I
“ hope to find a letter from you. With
“ Warwick, and the adjacent country,
“ you are well acquainted ; I shall there-
“ fore reserve the subject for conversa-
“ tion, and devote my letter to other
“ topics.

“ You will be surprised to hear of my
“ having passed a very agreeable day in
“ company with one of your old friends :
“ no other than Mr. Elton. I met him
“ at

“ at the ball, and though I had not seen
“ him for some years, remembered him
“ immediately. He did not at first
“ know me, for he did not see me when
“ he was last in town ; but, on hearing
“ my name, he accosted me with all the
“ old friendly heartiness with which he
“ used to notice me as a boy. I was a
“ little surprised, when I recollected the
“ affair of the Winfields, at the case
“ with which he spoke to me ; but I did
“ not think it my part to assume a serious
“ look, or to appear conscious of what
“ had passed between you and him. He
“ is in the best company here, and re-
“ sides occasionally at Warwick, but is
“ not settled. He has been here these
“ last six weeks, lives in private lodg-
“ ings, has saddle-horses, his groom,
“ and a gig. He entertains too, and is
“ really an agreeable and captivating
“ companion. He asked most kindly
“ for you, and expressed himself in such
“ terms.

“ terms respecting you, that, added to
“ his natural attractions, I felt myself
“ very much pleased with him. He
“ says he did not know of your being at
“ Mariton, or he would have come over
“ to see the family; and that he cer-
“ tainly will soon. I wish he may, and
“ explain the circumstance of his leaving
“ you, to your satisfaction; for he is so
“ prepossessing, that few things could
“ give me more pleasure than his re-
“ trieving your good opinion and Mr.
“ Cowper’s.

“ If you are surprised at my meeting
“ with Mr. Elton, I think you will be no
“ less so when I tell you who was one of
“ my partners at the ball. My mother
“ will laugh, I know, to think that her
“ son, born nineteen years ago in the
“ Cambridgeshire cottage, so celebrated
“ in the archives of Aubrey, should be
“ now dancing at Warwick with the
“ Right Honourable Lady Sudley.
“ That

"That same lord must always have had
"great taste. Her ladyship is very
"handsome, and dances admirably. My
"time has been very agreeably spent;
"I only wish you were all with me.
"Pray let me hear from you immediately;
"and give my love to my mother,
"my sisters, and Arthur-William.
"May every blessing attend you, my
"dear sir, is the prayer of

"Your affectionate son,

"ARTHUR AUBREY.

"P. S. Remember me kindly to
"Sbidlikins and Cæsar."

The contents of Arthur's letter astonished the whole group; for Aubrey had no secrets to which his children were not admitted; they all knew the anecdote respecting Elton, and the adventures of Lord Sudley at Martha's cottage. Mrs. Aubrey had never met with the latter after his flight across the fields

fields from the country people ; and his conduct was only detailed, in remembrance of Aubrey's successful plan and Cæsar's virtue. The family, however, had often heard him mentioned, and well remembered his marriage with a lady much younger than himself being announced in the newspapers about six years before ; but, as they never took the trouble to trace his lordship's course, they knew not what had become of him. As Arthur did not mention him, they imagined he was not at the ball, and that he had not seen him. As for Elton, Aubrey's feelings in a degree corresponded with Arthur's ; he wished he could be retrieved : but, from the conversation he had had with Mr. Cowper, he was convinced that it was a hopeless case ; and that conviction was now farther confirmed by the figure he was making at Warwick. Aubrey, however,

ever, had no fear of Arthur; and, pleased that his excursion proved so agreeable, he wrote next morning to give his consent to whatever he and Mr. Rowley determined on.

The impression made on the senses of Col. Spicer by the figure and voice of Emily, had fastened on his imagination, and kept him awake all night. He rose early; and, as soon as decency would allow, called at the parsonage, to apologize for Eudoxia's fit, and to express his mortification at the interruption of the song, which had charmed him so much. Emily, at his request, sang it for him, accompanying herself; and unconsciously completed the conquest of the preceding evening. He protracted his visit long beyond the usual limits, paid marked attention to the object of his admiration, whom he never ceased ogling with his arch eye; agreed with
Aubrey

Aubrey that swearing was a criminal habit; assured Mrs. Aubrey that his heart was formed for constancy; and never once thought that he was less agreeable to the company than to himself, or that he could be considered as encroaching on time.

The family began to miss Arthur, and not a day passed but they wished his return; which another letter from him appointed for the following Saturday. Meanwhile Col. Spicer's attention increased: he watched the motions of the Aubreys, and contrived to meet them in their rambles. On the day fixed, Arthur returned. He gave an account, with great animation, of all that he had seen, expressed the pleasure he had enjoyed, and particularly the delight he had felt in his trip to Stratford. Emily then asked him if he had seen Lord Sudley? "Oh, no," said he; "fortunately
"nately

“nately he was not in the country, or I
“should not have seen his beautiful
“seat, or danced with the beautiful Lady
“Sudley; for though they are parted,
“and she is entirely independent of him,
“she never comes to Warwick when
“he is at Sudley-Castle, as she is re-
“solved to avoid every probability of
“meeting him. It seems they agreed
“to a separation in less than a year
“after they married. She openly de-
“tests him, and her detestation is sup-
“ported by that of all the country.
“He is in a very ill state of health, and
“is at present in London consulting
“physicians. Lady Sudley talked so
“highly of the beauties of his seat, that
“I had a great desire to see it, and Mr.
“Rowley accompanied me.”—“Where-
“abouts is it?” said Arthurina.”—
“Between Warwick and Stratford,”
said he, “a little to the left of the high
“road,

“ road, from which the house appears
“ at a distance in the midst of lofty trees.
“ It is delightfully situated on the Avon,
“ and answered the expectation raised
“ by Lady Sudley’s description. The
“ grounds are supported in the finest or-
“ der, and his pride in it is the only ra-
“ tional delight he is allowed to have.”
—“ And where does Lady Sudley live?”
said Emily.—“ She has a pretty place at
“ Allesley, near Coventry, but often
“ stays at Warwick.” Having given a
full account of his excursion, Arthur, in
his turn, inquired how the family had
spent their time, and what pleasure they
had had at the *conversazione* and concert
at Spicer-Hall. His mother gave him
a history of the ludicrous reading of John
Gilpin; Emily described the entrance
of the Right Honourable Colonel Bob;
and Arthurina made him laugh at Billy’s
one, two, three, four, and the pop of
Eudoxia’s

Eudoxia's stays: but he was most delighted with Miss Spicer's compelling Emily to sing "*The soldier tir'd of war's alarms.*"

The return of Arthur put every thing in its usual train at the parsonage: study and amusement filled up the time; temperance and rambling supplied health, and months flowed away with the even joy of common life. Col. Spicer was oftener and longer at Spicer-Hall, and was more and more assiduous as the summer advanced in his endeavours to make an impression upon Emily; who only waited his proposal to dismiss him entirely. Arthur made frequent trips to Warwick, to cultivate a friendship he had formed there: and Aubrey, after a considerable perseverance in private admonition, desisted from fighting the windmill, submitted to the repulse of self-sufficiency, interchanged the common

mon civilities with his parishioners, felt the value of his existence, and banished every care.

One morning, about three weeks after Arthur's first excursion to Warwick, as Aubrey went into the study, he saw from the window a servant in livery on horse-back ring at the gate, and immediately after a handsome gig drive up, in which was a gentleman, whom at the first glance he knew to be Mr. Elton. In spite of his message by Arthur, no apparition could have surprised him more; and, so tender was his heart towards others, he trembled for the painful situation in which Elton seemed to place himself by this visit. Before he was admitted, therefore, Aubrey desired Arthur to leave him; and to take care that none of the family came to the study. Elton entered with a smiling countenance and an easy gait; as he advanced,

he put out his hand, which it was not in Aubrey's nature to reject, and thus accosted him. "After what passed in town, my dear Aubrey, you would have been surprised at this visit, had not my message by Arthur prepared you for it. You must have thought ill of me, I know you must; not only appearances, but reality, was against me; and, whatever your opinion was, I excuse it from my soul, for I deserved it. I have always reproached myself for not calling in Albemarle-street as soon as I left Carey-street; but the hurry of business, and some other circumstances, pressed so much that, faith! I thought of nothing but escaping from London. Do not judge of my friendship by what happened then, but by the motives that bring me to you now." Here Aubrey's feelings underwent a change,

change, from the morbid tenderness that quivered at the sufferings of a guilty mind, to an incipient resentment at a second attempt of duping him, which he thought he perceived in the drift of Elton's last expression. He fixed his eyes on him, prepared for the creation of another Winfield. "My uncle Trevor is dead," proceeded Elton: "you knew my uncle Trevor?"—"I barely remember him," replied Aubrey.—"You must recollect," continued Elton, "my talking to you of old Tom Trevor the miser, my maternal uncle, from whom I could never extract a shilling while he lived."—"I hope," said Aubrey, "that dying he has left you his fortune."—"Not exactly that," replied Elton; "the penurious wretch was appalled at the opposite disposition of my character, and was still more terrified at the thought of bequeathing,

“than of giving away his money while
“alive.”—Where is this tale to end!
thought Aubrey. “Fortunately,” con-
tinued Elton, “the old fool had taken
“it into his head that he should die as
“soon as he executed his will, and he
“never could prevail upon himself to
“make one; the consequence was, that
“he died intestate, and, as his heir, I
“inherit every shilling of his property.”

This was a very different conclusion
from what Aubrey expected: resent-
ment sunk, and he sincerely and heartily
congratulated Elton on his good fortune.
“I trust,” said he, “that he died rich.”
—“Moderately,” replied Elton: “I
“do not yet precisely know the ex-
“tent; for he only died last winter, and
“some of his money, I fear, is not very
“safe, being on usurious contracts; but
“I have no doubt I shall do very well,
“if I can manage at first.” This re-
mark

mark revived Aubrey's suspicions, and again prepared him for some attempt to abuse his credulity. "I suppose," proceeded Elton, "that, in the end, I may come in for about seven hundred a-year, no more : but that, with care, will soon remove my difficulties, and set me up again. You see I am prudent, for I live in lodgings, as Arthur must have told you ; I have only a man-servant and a couple of horses, and I give my friends an occasional dinner. I am determined not to exceed this plan till my affairs are perfectly arranged." Aubrey smiled, and applauded his determination. "They are in a good train," continued Elton ; "I have already been able to liquidate some heavy claims upon me ; but nothing gives me so much pleasure as to be able to convince you that, though I was compelled to hurry from

“ town at a moment when I was in possession of a check, the balance of which ought to have been instantly paid to you, I do not forget it. Pray, Aubrey, do you forget the irregularity of the transaction, and let this check on my banker efface all thoughts of the other.” Saying this, he took from his pocket-book an order, already written, and presented it to Aubrey. It was drawn for three hundred pounds on a respectable house in London.

Aubrey was now more surprised than ever, and he could not but yield his heart to a conviction so complete, of the honourable principles, which were only crushed by adverse circumstances, and were ready to raise their heads when the pressure that kept them under was removed. The fabrication of the distress of the Winfields was smoothed away

away by the severity of the fabricator's own case, and the triumph of his virtue; and Aubrey would gladly have spared Elton the recollection of it: but, of the three hundred pounds, he had sent thirty on his own account to the Winfields; and, to take it back, was awkward: he, therefore, gently hinted that the draft was for more than he had a right to by thirty pounds. "Oh! as to that," said Elton, "the Winfields —" He stopped, and looked full in Aubrey's face. The manner of speaking the name, and the look that followed, were ambiguous: it was not easy to tell whether Elton meant to abide by the reality of the existence of the distressed family, or to be directed, if necessary, by the cast of Aubrey's countenance, to a confession of their non-entity. To be detected in a falsehood, however, was at all events to be avoided; and, after a very short

pause, he proceeded: "The Winfields
" —; nay prithee, Aubrey, forget the
" Winfields, and think it enough that
" the money, the whole of the money,
" was applied to the relief of distress;
" no part of it is now wanted, and the
" whole again is yours."

Aubrey, delighted at this proof of Elton's return to virtue, said not a word that could give him pain, but assured him of his attachment, and begged to see him frequently at the parsonage. He pressed him to dine with him that day; which he did: and the family being previously prepossessed in his favour, on being made acquainted by Aubrey with what had passed, a pleasant afternoon was spent in the company of Elton, who made himself very agreeable to Mrs. Aubrey and the girls, confirmed his impression on Arthur, and won Arthur-William's heart. Aubrey immediately

diately forwarded the draft to Charles Sensitive, insisting on his appropriating it for Jacob's wife, and putting him in mind of his promise to visit Mariton. The draft was regularly honoured; and Charles keeping the money to gratify his friend, renewed his engagement to spend some time with him in the autumn.

CHAPTER XXXV.

New Ghosts at the Castle. A Visit to Leicester.

*Happiness of the Aubreys. Arthur Aubrey
writes to Mr. Cowper.*

THE tradition of the old castle being haunted, which had contributed to render the spot on which the ruins stood more solitary, had ceased to be so much attended to since the arrival of the Aubreys; for the path along the river, and thence to the unbeaten heights, was a favourite walk with them; and their example had induced others to rove at times to the ruins. It was, however, revived in the course of the summer, and, before the end of August, the belief grew so strong, that the environs of the
castle

castle became a greater solitude than ever; for the more it had been frequented, the less it attracted the Aubreys, who found other walks.

As the report gained ground, it reached Aubrey's ears; and he thought proper to discountenance seriously the idle tales which were propagated: he not only preached publicly on the absurdity of crediting general and useless breaches of the laws of nature, but he talked privately with the people, and endeavoured to shame them out of their credulity, by ascribing all such appearances as they spoke of to the force of imagination. There were more than one, however, who declared positively that they had lately seen strange figures moving about the ruins at dusk; and one man went so far as to say, he had seen the figure of a woman all on fire sink into the earth. The pertinacity of these persons made

Aubrey at first suspect that some people had taken it into their heads to play tricks on the Mariton clowns, in consequence of the ghostly tradition; and he watched the ruins for several weeks; but nothing appearing to justify the suspicion, he concluded that the tales originated in the illusions of fancy combined with ignorance, and despaired of eradicating the prejudice.

Previous to the time appointed by Sensitive for his visit to the parsonage, the Aubreys, all but Arthur, who went into Warwickshire, made an excursion to Leicester, to see their venerable friend, Dr. Searle, and the amiable Mrs. Searle and Amelia. They were received with great affection. The worthy old man was still cheerful, and possessed his faculties; but Aubrey thought he perceived a considerable change in the lines of his face, and he lamented it sincerely.

After

After spending an agreeable week at Leicester, they would fain have taken Amelia back with them to Mariton; but her mother could not spare her.

"My uncle," said she to Mrs. Aubrey, "is evidently breaking, and daily requires more attention: Amelia is my right hand; I should be at a great loss without her. You must come to us again soon; my uncle seems happier in your society than in any other, and he continually speaks of Mr. Aubrey with uncommon warmth of affection."

Aubrey promised another visit as soon as his friend Sensitive left Mariton; and the family taking leave, went into the old coach, and proceeded towards home. On the way, Mrs. Aubrey and the girls concurred with Aubrey in opinion respecting the visible decay of Dr. Searle, and spoke of him with love, esteem, and regret. They were silent for some time after,

after, till Aubrey, pressing Mrs. Aubrey's hand, broke the silence by the following reflexions: "What a happy
" life do we lead! my dear Emily:
" What a blessing has our misfortune
" proved to us! I have been snatched
" from years of languid ease, from
" thoughtless repetitions of frivolous
" engagements, and roused to the performance of the sacred duties of my
" profession. Our house is comfortable,
" our neighbours attentive and kind,
" our children virtuous, amiable, and
" united." Emily and Arthurina kissed each one of his hands: "Arthur is so
" sensible, so prudent, so candid, so
" formed to make friends! Then the
" prospect I have of enabling him to
" pursue the studies proper for the profession he may chuse. My heart is
" light, my Emily; I am the happiest
" of men." Thus, forgetting all that
was.

was sinister, and gratefully alive to the real happiness in his possession, Aubrey exulted in his situation : his wife and daughters participated in his feelings ; and they drew up to the parsonage with as much delight as they had ever experienced in arriving at Aubrey-Hall.

Cæsar, whom they had not thought proper to carry to Leicester, came out to open the carriage-door. His face did not wear the smile with which he was accustomed to meet his master and mistress. Aubrey observed the want of it : “ Cæsar,” said he, where is Arthur ? ” — “ At home, sir,” replied Cæsar, averting his eye from his master’s. — “ At home, and not come to meet us ! ” “ What’s the matter ? ” — “ Have patience, massa,” said Cæsar ; “ mass “ Arthur not very well.” The alarm produced by this information soon cleared the coach : Aubrey, followed
by

by Mrs. Aubrey and the girls, rushed into the hall; where they met Mrs. Miller, who begged them, for God's sake, to be calm, before they attempted to see Arthur. "But will nobody tell me what is the matter with him?" cried Mrs. Aubrey, in great agitation.— "He was seized last night with a fever," said Mrs. Miller, "which has been increasing ever since; he is delirious at times; and Mr. Browne says he must be kept very quiet."—"Oh, my child!" cried Mrs. Aubrey: "where is Mr. Browne? Has any body else seen him? Send for Mr. Browne directly."—"Pray, my mistress," said Cæsar, "pray Miss Emily, pray Miss Arthurina, go, stop in the parlour till Mr. Browne come to you: he 'long wid Mafs Arthur now. Go, Mrs. Miller, go up, send him down."

While

While Mrs. Miller was gone, Cæsar informed Aubrey, that Arthur came home on the morning of the preceding day; that he seemed extremely uneasy, walked all the morning up and down the parlour, ate no dinner, wrote a letter in the afternoon, tore it, wrote another, and tore that, drank several glasses of water, and at last complained of being feverish. "He put his hand on mine," said Cæsar, "and ask me if he not very hot. I was frightened, and went directly for Mr. Browne, without tell him I was going." As Cæsar was speaking, Mr. Browne came into the room. The distracted family flew round him. "Let me beg you to be composed," said he.—"Is he in danger?"—"He will be in greater danger," replied Mr. Browne, "if he sees any of you agitated. When I saw him yesterday, I imagined, from his account, that
"the

“ the fever was the consequence of violent exercise : I therefore bled him, and hoped a night’s rest, assisted with the medicine I gave him, would have got it under ; but, when I saw him this morning, I determined without delay to call in Doctor Murray.”—
“ Oh ! my child !” cried Mrs. Aubrey.—“ I dispatched an express to Litchfield,” continued Mr. Browne, “ and I have been expecting him this hour past.”—“ You think he is in danger then ?”—“ Diseases are all more or less dangerous,” replied the apothecary ; “ but, I trust, that this will not baffle the skill of Dr. Murray.”—
“ May I not go up to his room,” cried his mother, with a distracted countenance.—“ I advise you to wait a little,” said he : “ his imagination wanders ; your appearing may make him more delirious : stay, and hear what
“ the

“ the doctor says.” With the most anxious reluctance did Mrs. Aubrey follow the advice of Mr. Browne, whom she begged to go and sit with Arthur till the physician came.

He instantly complied; and Cæsar, hearing him go, returned to the parlour, to share the misery of the family. “ Massa !” said he, “ it long time since
“ I think something ail Mass Arthur.
“ He never show his uneasiness before
“ you, my mistress, or the young ladies ;
“ but, when he alone, he melancholy,
“ and sometimes tears run down his
“ cheeks.” This information was a thunder-bolt to Aubrey. “ Is it possible !” exclaimed he, “ is it possible that there
“ is any thing on his mind which he
“ would conceal from me ! Has he
“ withdrawn his confidence from me !
“ that confidence, that candour which we
“ prize so much, on which our happiness
“ rests

“ nefs is built ? Oh ! my fon ! my fon !
“ what demon has been able to fhut a
“ heart fo pure, fo transparent ! ” —
“ Oh ! my dear papa ! ” cried Emily,
burfting into tears, “ it cannot be ; it
“ is fome miftake : indeed, Cæfar, there
“ is fome miftake.” Arthurina’s heart
was too much predifpofed to fympathy
to refift the contagion of Emily’s tears :
without fpeaking, ſhe reclined her head
on Aubrey’s neck, and wept bitterly.
Mrs. Aubrey, her elbow refting on the
table, and her hand covering her eyes,
fuffered the keenefl agonies of imagina-
tion. Arthur-William fat on a low ftool
at her knee, and hid his face in her lap.
A filence of agony enfued : it lafted till
the founds of carriage-wheels and the
ringing of the gate-bell announced the
phyfician. By Mr. Browne’s defire, he
was ſhown into the ftudy, where he at-
tended him to communicate his obfer-
vations,

ventions, and the steps he had taken. They then joined the family. Dr. Murray was as humane and tender as he was skilful. He entered the parlour with an encouraging look, assured them that Mr. Browne had said nothing to make him despair, and hoped that he should bring them a favourable account. He was then conducted to his patient's room by Mr. Browne, whom Aubrey followed, and who, at the door, prepared him to find his son in a state of delirium. Mrs. Miller was sitting at the bed-side. Arthur was very restless, rolled his eyes from side to side, and talked incoherently; he was insensible to all that passed. While Dr. Murray approached and felt his hand, Aubrey threw himself upon his knees at the foot of the bed, and wept and prayed like a father.

“The love I feel for my children is thy
“will, oh heavenly Parent! Thou gavest
“them

“ them to me ! Thou knowest how
“ watchful I have been of the trust . . . ”
—“ Poor man ! ” said Dr. Murray, “ I
“ feel for you ; but moderate your
“ emotions for the sake of the objects
“ of your affection : the fever runs very
“ high, but still I do not despair getting
“ him through it : the issue lies with
“ Providence, and I hope I shall be a
“ successful instrument in his hands.”

Aubrey had never in the whole course of his life been so agitated before. He rose, thanked Dr. Murray, wiped away his tears, and said he feared the cause of Arthur’s malady lay deeper than usual ; that it was in his mind. “ We will talk
“ of that hereafter,” replied the doctor ;
“ at present we must endeavour to re-
“ duce the violence of the fever.” He then ordered more blood to be taken from his patient ; and returned to the parlour to write a prescription. As the
case

case was doubtful, though his fears preponderated, he thought it his part to give hope; and, accordingly, both his conversation and demeanour were adapted to that design. He permitted Mrs. Aubrey to sit up part of the night with her son, on her promising to consider delirium as common to acute fevers, and no particular symptom of danger; and, at her entreaty, he took a bed at the parsonage. Mrs. Miller was sent to take rest, and Nanny supplied her place in Arthur's room, where Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey passed the most miserable night they had ever known in their lives: neither did Emily nor Arthurina close their eyes; they sat up and listened, and prayed, and wept.

In the morning, Dr. Murray found that, notwithstanding the copious bleeding of his patient, the fever had risen; his pulse was still hard and more frequent.

quent. He directed Mr. Browne to continue the medicine prescribed, and to take some more blood at noon; and then went off for Litchfield, promising to return at night. It was Sunday; and Aubrey had returned from Leicester to do his duty; but, finding that it would be impossible for him to attend, he had requested Mr. Browne, on his leaving him the evening before, to engage a young clergyman residing at Loughborough to supply his place. The whole neighbourhood soon heard of Arthur's dangerous state, and the gate of the parsonage was crowded with inquiries. His fever continued to rage; and Dr. Murray, at his return in the evening, could not console the family with an assurance of any favourable change. The parsonage, where happiness seemed to have taken up its abode, presented only scenes of the most poignant distress. Day
passed

passed without hope, and night without rest. The struggle between disease and constitution lasted the whole week. Dr. Murray came every day, and generally took his bed in the house. He said and did every thing in his power to comfort and support the Aubreys in this most dreadful trial. The duration of the fever did not fail to alarm himself, and he watched for the crisis of it with the most anxious perseverance, administering all that his skill and experience suggested. At the end of the week he knew a change must take place. He did not quit the house all Saturday and Sunday.

On Sunday night the delirium was higher than ever. His mother, herself nearly exhausted, continued to watch him. Dr. Murray having purposely slept in the day-time, joined her at one o'clock in the morning, when he ex-

pected the change. He found her standing at the bed-side, the chair on which she had been sitting behind her, her arms folded, her eyes fixed upon her son, who lay perfectly still, breathing hard, but more freely. The doctor, in a whisper, begged she would leave the room. "Then you think it is all over!" cried she: "no, I will stay till the last moment by him."—"Hush!" said he; "he sleeps: you know not the consequence of disturbing him at present: if you *will* stay, sit down and be quiet." She was silent, and sat down on the chair from which she had risen. Mrs. Miller, who had been sitting at the head of the bed, gave her seat to Dr. Murray, and removed to another part of the room. A solemn, anxious silence ensued, and lasted for four hours. It was soon broad day-light. At five o'clock Arthur turned

turned round, and said, in a composed tone of voice, "Edmund! where are you, Edmund?" His mother would have risen, but Murray's finger restrained her. Arthur's back was turned to the side where they were, and he had thrown his arm over the sheet. Murray felt his pulse, looked at Mrs. Aubrey, and smiled. "He will live!" cried she, starting up; "O God! he will live! "My boy will live! my boy will live!" She darted out of the room, flew to her own chamber, calling Aubrey; and, not finding him there, ran down stairs. She found him with Emily, Arthurina, and Cæsar, in the parlour, where they had been sitting all night; Aubrey on the sofa, his girls by him, each holding a hand, and leaning on his neck; Cæsar on Arthur-William's mahogany stool, his head on his left hand, and his right hand supporting the elbow of his left arm. They

flew towards the door—Mrs. Aubrey was too much agitated to speak; and they, expecting the fatal sentence, took it for granted. They stood for a minute gazing at her with horror. She strove in vain to articulate her words, sunk upon the floor, and fainted away.

Dr. Murray came in in the midst of this complicated scene of distress, and having immediately undeceived Aubrey and his daughters, assisted in recovering Mrs. Aubrey, whom they placed upon the sofa. When she revived, Aubrey asked Murray if there were any hope. “Great hope,” replied he, “the softness of his pulse, and the moisture of his skin indicate a favourable issue. Come, be satisfied and compose your spirits, unless you have a mind to throw yourselves into the state from which my patient is escaping.” Convinced by the doctor’s manner that there was a
great

great change in Arthur for the better, Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, being worn out by anxiety and watching, consented to take some rest in bed, and to refresh themselves completely before they had any communication with him. When they retired, Aubrey accompanied Dr. Murray back to Arthur's chamber. As they entered, he said, without moving:—"What's o'clock?" Dr. Murray made a sign to Aubrey to go round the bed and answer. "About six," said Aubrey, obeying the doctor's sign. "Oh Sir! is it you?" said he; "I thought it was Edmund Smyth." "How are you, my dear Arthur," said Aubrey, sitting down on the bedside, and taking his hand, which though warm was moist. "Very well, "thank you," he replied. "Not very "well," said Aubrey, "but getting "well."—"Didn't somebody come in

“with you?” asked Arthur, turning his head, when, perceiving the shadow of the doctor, he added, “who is that behind the curtain? Edmund, is it you?” “My dear boy,” cried Aubrey, “be composed, and you shall see Edmund. You must take care of yourself, for you have been very ill. Have you any objection to see Dr. Murray?”—“Certainly not,” replied he, “is that the doctor behind the curtain?”—“It is,” said Aubrey: on which the doctor came forward, saying, “you must not be alarmed at seeing a physician in your room; for you are out of my hands before you knew you were under them. Now that you are in no danger whatever, I may venture to tell you, that you have had a very serious illness.” He then shook hands with him, felt his pulse, asked him some questions, and pronounced him convalescent.

lescent. At the same time, he forbade him to exert himself in any way, till he had his permission. Arthur promised obedience, but harped on Edmund Smyth. "Have I only dreamt it," said he, "or is Edmund in the house?"—"You have dreamt it, my good friend," said the doctor. "Should you like to have him here?" said Aubrey. "Oh! very much indeed," replied he. "I have had such dreams about you all, but so much stronger than dreams in general. I saw——"—"Come, come," said Dr. Murray, "you must not talk so much. We must leave you; and pray, Mrs. Miller, do not suffer him to talk." At the mention of Mrs. Miller's name Arthur turned to see her: "'Sbidlikins!" said he, "how are you? Where is my mother? and——"—"No more, no more:" said the doctor, interrupting him—"lie
N 4 " quiet

“ quiet till I see you again ; and be regular in taking the medicines I shall order you. I shall see you in the evening.” He then left the room, taking Aubrey with him.

His post-chaise, which he had ordered the evening before, drove up to the gate as he was going down stairs : but before he set off, he went into the sitting-room to breakfast, which Cæsar, on being made happy by the joyful tidings, had taken care to get ready. Here Dr. Murray, after congratulating Aubrey on the prospect of Arthur’s recovery, said ; “ and now, my good Sir, let me, both as a friend and as a physician, give you a caution. You told me, that you had reason to believe your son’s illness had a mental cause : I know it, and I will tell it to you ; but you must be prudent, or I predict, from the sensibility of this youth’s
“ temper-

“temperament, you will have serious
“cause of repentance. When you know
“the evil, be careful in applying the
“remedy. Your son has been se-
“duced—” —“Great God!” exclaimed
Aubrey. “For some time past,” con-
tinued Dr. Murray, “he has been en-
“gaged with a very beautiful woman, to
“whom he was introduced at Warwick.”
—“Surely,” cried Aubrey, “not with
“Lady Sudley!” —“Why not with Lady
“Sudley, as well as any other lady,” re-
plied Murray. “Oh! fool, fool, that
“I was,” exclaimed Aubrey, “to trust
“him from under my own care!” —
“Nay, nay,” said the doctor, “it is well
“it’s no worse.” —“No worse! What
“can be worse than the loss of that can-
“dour which was my glory! the once
“limpid stream of truth is made turbid;
“I can see no more to the bottom of his
“soul; the friendship that subsisted be-

“tween us is injured. Vices are linked
“in a chain; one brings on another:
“dissimulation attends them all!”—
“My good Sir,” said Dr. Murray,
“without exculpating your son, though I
“think it would not be very difficult to
“obtain his pardon from the most scrupulous
“judge, I must observe, that a
“secret of this kind must be considered as
“less criminal than the divulging of it.
“After being tempted, the confession
“of a crime of this nature was not to
“be expected; was not to be wished
“for; for it would, on reflection, have
“lowered him even in your opinion.
“My advice to you is, to appear ignorant
“of the matter, and to leave time to
“work his cure: I speak as a physician
“—for health and life may depend upon
“it. Lady Sudley cannot hold such a
“youth long in her chains; for she has
“nothing more than a little personal
2 “beauty:

“ beauty: her mind is very deficient, and
“ her passions very strong. I have
“ known her from her infancy. Lord
“ Sudley, an emaciated debauchee, mar-
“ ried her for her face, and grew tired
“ of her in a few months. Since their
“ separation, she is suspected to have led
“ a loose life, and has but just managed
“ to keep a footing in society. She
“ has now again made herself the sub-
“ ject of the tattle of the day; and
“ her amour with your son is fully can-
“ vassed, both at Coventry and War-
“ wick.” Aubrey stood aghast. “ I had
“ the whole account from a friend, who
“ resides at the former place: nay, even
“ the compunctions of your son are no
“ secret; for, though he is silent, the
“ lady herself has lost her discretion. I
“ really believe this fever has been
“ brought on by his feelings of remorse
“ conspiring with violent exercise: but

“ he will recover, if you do not impede
“ his progress. You must, as much as
“ possible, divert his mind from thoughts
“ that are likely to oppress it.” Aubrey thanked the doctor, and, with a sigh, promised to attend to his advice : he then conducted him to his carriage.

Arthur's intrigue, the notoriety of his crime, the breach of candour, sunk deeply into Aubrey's heart ; but the love of his son predominated : he resolved for the present to conceal his emotions ; and, with the hope of diverting his ideas, and accelerating his recovery, he wrote a pressing solicitation to Mr. Cowper to send Edmund to Mariton.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Progress of Arthur's Recovery. Friendship with Edmund Smyth. Cupid lurking beneath a Shrub on the Bank of a River. Aubrey opens his Mind to Edmund. Arrival of a Friend. Departure of Arthur and Edmund.

IN the course of a few days, Arthur was pronounced by Dr. Murray to be out of danger; Mrs. Aubrey and his sisters were suffered to chat in his room, and Arthur-William came and said his lessons to him. But, though he daily gained strength, his cheerfulness kept no pace with his recovery. The engaging smile, that used so often to illumine his countenance, did not re-appear: he spoke affectionately, but seriously; and he was more inclined

inclined to be thoughtful than talkative. At first Aubrey made some allowance for the state of his nerves, after such an attack as he had suffered; but when he observed that his thoughtfulness increased in the course of his convalescence, he became doubly wretched, and felt the more from being now compelled to disguise his wretchedness under a show of joy. He was more anxious than ever to have Edmund Smyth at the parsonage; and a week having elapsed since he wrote to Mr. Cowper, he was greatly surprised that he had heard nothing of him.

It was not till Arthur had begun to walk from room to room on the same floor with his chamber, and was talking of going down stairs, and into the garden, that Aubrey's suspense was removed by the arrival of Edmund's portmanteau, which had been sent on in a public carriage.

riage. The sight of his name on the direction spread joy through the family. Arthur smiled from his heart, and cried, "huzza." The portmanteau was received, but its master did not make his appearance : for two days the Aubreys were in constant expectation of seeing their young friend, and began to be uneasy lest some accident had happened. On the fourth day he arrived, having been three on the road, as he was mounted on one of his uncle's horses. Giving his horse to Cæsar, who opened the gate to him, he hastened to the sitting-room, where he found the whole family. The bashfulness, which at his first interview with them in Albemarle street had cast a little rustic awkwardness on his manners, was very much worn off ; and the disguise of his figure, under his village drab, was entirely removed, for he was now dressed in clothes
which

which were made while he was in town. The colour of his coat was a high brown, which set off his face to advantage ; and, being well and fashionably made, his person had fair play, and appeared elegant. He wore a white waistcoat, and leather breeches, with boots and spurs. He entered with an ease and grace that surprised and delighted the Aubreys, who received him with great affection, which was returned in a very engaging manner. He accounted for Mr. Cowper's not immediately replying to Aubrey's letter, by telling him that he was not at Edenbower when it came; and that, as soon as he returned, he thought it better to dispatch the portmanteau than to write. After answering all the kind enquiries, made for his uncle, his mother, and sister, " Well Arthur," said he, " —we always call you Arthur "at Edenbower—well, my dear friend, " you

“you must make haste and get stout,
“to return with me; for my uncle says
“that I must make it the preliminary of
“my stay at Mariton: and he gives me
“a full fortnight, if you stipulate to be
“quite well at the end of it.”—“I am
“getting round fast,” replied Arthur,
“but no stipulation can be agreeable to
“me, or any of us, which includes your
“leaving Mariton.” Aubrey, however,
being struck with the advantage that
might be reaped from Arthur’s visit to
Melford, where he would be at a dis-
tance from the object and scene of his
misfortune, said, “Arthur will be happy
“to return with you, I am sure; but
“meanwhile let us forget the period of
“your going.” That was soon banished
from their thoughts. Edmund was full
of spirits, Emily and Arthurina resumed
their natural liveliness, and Aubrey and
Mrs. Aubrey had the happiness of ob-
serving

serving the revival of Arthur's smile. In three days after Edmund's arrival, Arthur was able to walk round the garden with him; and before the week was over, he strolled with his sisters and Edmund to the castle ruins.

As soon as it was known that he was well enough to go out, visits of congratulation poured in upon the Aubreys, which Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey managed in general to receive alone, in order that the young folks might not be deprived of their rambles. Among the first visitors were the Spicers; the colonel had made it a point with them, and that they should inform him when the family began to see company, that he might return to Mariton from town, whither he had gone on finding the door of the parsonage shut by Arthur's illness. When Arthur grew stronger, Edmund and he sometimes rode on horseback,
that

that the former might see the country to a greater extent : in these rides the girls were left behind ; and the two young men, led by a congeniality of sentiment, formed a friendship of the warmest and noblest kind. Out of their own families neither of them had yet met with any person of either sex who so fully took possession of his heart ; the attachment was mutually grateful, and each felt and declared that he could sacrifice his life for the other.

A soul so congenial with Arthur's, could not but be congenial with Emily's also, but to form a similar friendship with his sister was not so easy. In company Edmund delighted to address his conversation to her, but when left by accident alone with her, far from feeling the promptness with which he had declared his sentiments to her brother, he became immediately reserved ; his lips were
mute,

mute, his looks constrained. His silence and embarrassment, however, were more eloquent than words to Emily, whose downcast eye, and sympathetic taciturnity, unconsciously marked the conformity and harmony of their souls. She perceived what he had no idea of betraying; she felt that she was beloved by him. Edmund was not so penetrating: he did not see either into his own heart or hers; and, though he was not devoid of ambition, he had never once suffered himself to conceive a matrimonial alliance possible, in the situation of life in which he stood; not on account of his entire dependence on his uncle, who was indeed a father to him, but because his mother and sister were combined in that dependence, and his uncle had taught him to consider them as the first objects of the care of his life. He only wished, therefore, to form such a friendship with
Emily,

Emily, as he had formed with her brother, without being aware that it was impossible. But this impossibility was made clear to him, by an accident which happened during his stay at Mariton. Emily's handkerchief was blown by the wind out of her hand, as she turned from the river side to pursue the path leading to the castle ruins. It was caught by a branch of a shrub, overhanging one of those deep holes, which here and there are formed in the beds of shallow streams. She called out as the handkerchief flew away : Edmund leaned over the bank to reach it ; he stretched till he lost his poise, on which he seized the branch to save himself from falling. The branch was brittle, it broke, and he fell with it, handkerchief and all, into the river, which at that place was very deep. Before he reached the water Emily screamed ; but when in consequence of the height from
which

which he fell, she saw him sink, her agitation overcame all fear of danger ; she clasped her hands, and crying out—" O save him ! save him !" plunged into the river after him. The deep part of the water extended but a little way ; and Edmund could swim. He rose on the opposite side, as Emily left the bank. He had heard her words, and turned to look at her : he darted towards her, and caught her by the arm, at the instant her lovely agitated face was disappearing. With one hand he supported her above the surface of the water, and with the other swam towards the side whence she had sprung, but a little lower down the stream, where the bottom was gradually shallower. He encouraged her as he swam, but she was insensible to his encouragement ; and when his feet touched the ground, he took her into his arms, and bore her senseless to the bank.

The

The terrified Arthurina, who was by her sister when she plunged into the river, now stood trembling to receive her; and Arthur, who had loitered behind with Arthur-William, to see him make ducks and drakes upon the surface of the stream, hastened up to the spot, followed by his brother. Arthur-William, believing that his sister was drowned, wrung his little hands, wept, and cried out—"What shall we do? Oh! what shall we do?" Emily's head had not been intirely under water, and her swoon being the consequence of the terror she felt on finding herself sinking, was of short duration. While the little group, sitting or kneeling about her, were looking at her with the greatest anxiety, she revived, and soon recovered sufficient strength to walk back to the parsonage, which was at no great distance, and
where

where she was soon made comfortable by a change of clothes.

Though neither Edmund nor Emily had been in any great danger, this incident made the former acquainted with his own heart. The impulse that had driven Emily into the river might be attributed to other causes than love; nor had he the presumption to conceive that it originated from such an emotion: but it was enough that he had at any rate been the object of her solicitude; that she had thrown herself into the river; that he had saved her from sinking. From that hour he never looked at her but with conscious tenderness; from that hour the images of the scene dwelt upon his mind: the "O save him!" the angelic figure rapidly descending; Emily supported above the water; Emily in his arms; recurred too frequently to his thoughts to leave him in
doubt

doubt that she had made an impression which it behoved him to efface. From that hour too the reserve of his demeanour, which he had before only felt when they were alone, was constant: he looked at her but in stolen glances; he spoke to her but when silence would have been extraordinary. As Edmund had never been very forward the change was not visible to Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey, who, after hearing of the accident with retrospective alarm, ended with laughing at it, and ascribing Emily's leap to the movements of terror.

The fortnight allowed to Edmund by his uncle now drew to an end. The art of subduing desire he had learned from necessity, the most successful of masters, under whose tuition Mr. Cowper had placed him from his infancy. Young as he was, habit had confirmed him in the mastery of the passions common in early

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life. The inutility of regretting the want of unattainable objects matured the virtue of self-denial, on occasions where the attainment was only opposed by prudence, the foster child of necessity. Edmund never formed fruitless wishes, and never cherished imprudent ones. The passion that now assailed his heart was new to him ; but, believing it to be both hopeless and imprudent, he resolved not even to form a wish for its gratification, but to banish it immediately from his mind. As nothing was so likely to confirm his resolution as absence, he took an opportunity of requesting Arthur not to oppose their leaving Mariton at the time appointed by Mr. Cowper, and silenced every objection by saying that when they were at Melford he would give him such reasons as could not fail to satisfy him. Arthur yielded ; and his health being now almost completely re-established,

blished, he had reasons of his own for accelerating their departure,

His father and mother too were not without their motives for wishing him in Gloucestershire: Arthur, though pleased with the company of his friend, and joining without reluctance in all amusements proposed, had by no means recovered his former cheerfulness. His mind evidently laboured with its burden; there was a recurring, melancholy pensiveness, which Aubrey was but too sensible was not the remains of his illness: but whether it proceeded from contemplating a renewal of his intercourse with Lady Sudley, or from remorse at the state of insincerity in which he was living at the parsonage, or from both, was not settled in his opinion. It was the constant subject of his conversation with Mrs. Aubrey, when alone with her; and he had determined upon a
o 2 plan,

plan, the success of which was in one of the cases certain, and in the other probable. His resolution was to let the two friends go without delay, as the distance of Melford would be a bar to the communication he feared, and would in all likelihood put an end to a connexion so criminal and so pregnant with misery. He likewise resolved to open his mind freely to Edmund, not only to account for his not urging a continuance of his stay at Mariton, but with a view of regaining Arthur's candour, and relieving his mind of the consciousness of continued insincerity, by showing him not so much the error as the uselessness of it. Within two or three days of the time fixed for Edmund's return, he told him privately, that he wished to converse with him alone, on a subject that gave him infinite pain; and he requested that he would meet him in the summer-house in
the

the garden in an hour, without giving a hint to Arthur, or any one else, of their meeting. Edmund, ignorant of the circumstances that had given birth to the pain alluded to by Aubrey, and conscious of what had been passing in his own heart, was startled at this appointment. He instantly suspected that he had betrayed himself by his looks; and that Emily's father meant, if not to reproach him, at least to warn him against the encouragement of a passion which could never be attended with success. Wretched in the company of Emily, he retired to his own chamber, where he gave way to the most painful and mortifying reflexions, till it was time to attend his appointment.

How surprised and delighted was he to find that Aubrey, far from thinking as he had done, expressed a joy at observing the friendship that had taken root

between him and Arthur, and at the reciprocity of affection in all the family; and that the appointment was made to repose in him a confidence of the greatest importance to their happiness! Aubrey expatiated on the felicity he had enjoyed in the candour of Arthur's mind; and, contrasting the pangs he suffered in consequence of the duplicity rendered necessary by the conduct of Lady Sudley, deputed to Edmund the office of removing the dreadful necessity. "Chuse a proper opportunity, my dear young friend," said Aubrey, "to let him know that I am fully acquainted with the successful artifices of that abandoned woman; tell him, not to let an imaginary secret continue to prey upon his mind; and that all I ask is the relinquishment of the crime which has involved us in the misery of veiling our hearts from each other."

“other.”—“Oh! Sir,” replied Edmund, “let me go and speak to him immediately: how can he bear to conceal any thing from such a father! I saw he was miserable, and now I know the cause. Oh! let me go and remove it instantly.”—“No, my dear Edmund,” said Aubrey, “you must not be precipitate. I know not what the consequence might be, if he were made acquainted with my knowledge of the circumstance here: but opened to him gently, at a distance from me, and by a friend so beloved as you are, I have no fear but all will be well.” Edmund yielded, declaring at the same time that he should not be happy till he had completely restored the ease of his friend’s mind, by diverting it from brooding over the horror of secrecy. Aubrey pressed his hand, assuring him that he stood in his heart mixed in the

group of his own children. The thought raised by this expression affected Edmund to such a degree that he was ready to open his whole soul to Aubrey, but his tongue was unable to obey the pure dictates of his mind, and he recollected himself in time. Having settled the day of departure for the succeeding Monday, they strolled together round the garden, conversing on topics less interesting, and joined the rest of the family.

Aubrey informed them that Edmund persisted in the resolution of setting out at the time his uncle had fixed, and that Monday was the day. Mrs. Aubrey and Arthurina exclaimed against it. Emily faintly said; "So soon!" Arthur declared himself neutral. Arthur-William was a noisy champion for delay. But Aubrey agreeing with Edmund that punctuality was indispensable, as nothing new on the subject had arrived from Mr. Cowper,

Cowper, the affair was settled. A little gloom ensued ; it was palest in Emily's face ; nor did it entirely disappear from the Parsonage during the remainder of Edmund's stay. On Saturday, he accompanied Arthur on a round of visits to take leave ; and every thing was prepared for their departure. The family unanimously insisted on their travelling in Aubrey's gig, as they were afraid Arthur was not yet strong enough to take so long a journey on horseback. It was arranged accordingly, and a man was hired to ride Edmund's horse.

The party were taking their tea, and talking of Melford, when a loud ringing of the gate bell proclaimed a visitor. " I forgot to tell you," said Arthur, " that Colonel Spicer was expected at Spicer-Hall : perhaps this is he come to take leave of me."—" I hope not ;" said Emily. The information given by
Arthur,

Arthur, and his remark, had brought the figure of the dapper coxcomb into their thoughts, when the door opened, and a very different person appeared. Aubrey flew with open arms to embrace Charles Sensitive. The whole family loved him; and his welcome from every individual of it was most cordial. Charles's fine, open, benevolent countenance, and his slight, elegant figure, in plain cloaths, gained some additional advantage by supplanting the image of Col. Spicer. The arrival of Sensitive would probably have made an alteration in the time of Arthur and Edmund's departure, had it not been for the occurrences that had taken place. Sensitive himself too urged the benefit that would be derived from change of air: and Aubrey soon had an opportunity of imparting his own reasons to his friend. Arthur regretted going from Mariton just as he was come; and it was
not

not till Sensitive assured him that he meant to make a long stay, and should be at the Parsonage when he returned, that he was entirely reconciled to leaving him. At the hour appointed the gig was at the gate; all formality was avoided in the farewell; Edmund concealed his feelings with considerable address; and if, when he kissed his hand as Arthur drove off, the eyes of Emily filled with tears, so did those of Arthurina.

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